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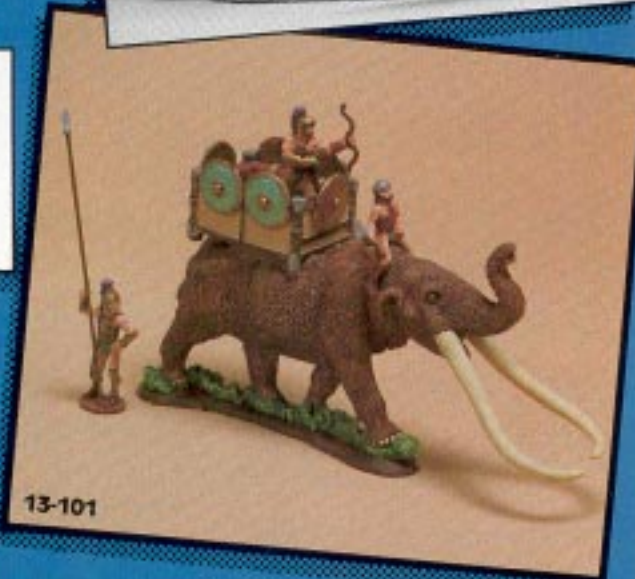
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## Time trouble

One of the things we don't do very well (and therefore don't do very often) is keep up with happenings in the real world. It's tough to be timely when you try to cover something in a monthly magazine — first of all because it only comes out once a month, and second of all because we finish production of an issue one month before it gets printed and mailed. In even the best of cases, that usually translates into at least a six-week time lag between when something happens and our first chance to tell you about it.

In the worst of cases, the time lag is considerably longer than that. As an example of how bad things can get, here's the story of Comstar Enterprises and that company's play-by-mail game, *World of Velgor*.

In late 1983, Mike Gray wrote an article entitled "PBM: Problems by mail." He said some things about *World of Velgor* that were apparently true at the time he wrote them — but which were outdated and *not* true by the time the article finally appeared in the May 1984 issue of the magazine.

Bruce Abrahams, president of Comstar Enterprises, brought this fact to our attention after he (and, unfortunately, lots of other people) saw Mike's article. The start-up of the game was delayed, which was the basis for Mike's comment that he looked forward to playing in the game "if and when it is ready." By the time the article came out, the game was up and running, and according to Bruce it had been operating since February. In his letter to me, Bruce pointed out that the outdated news had confused a lot of people, who had seen advertisements for the game in other magazines and understandably were bewildered about what was going on. He asked for a "clarification of the matter," which I hope this piece of writing has provided.

The responsibility for delaying the publication of Mike's article is ours. But we committed an even greater mistake by printing the "if and when" statement without checking to find out if it was still accurate. I hope Comstar Enterprises hasn't suffered any irreparable damage because of our error, and I hope we'll never let old information creep into our pages again.







Issue #61 was the last time we published a "Dragon's Bestiary" column, which had been our every-issue vehicle for dishing out new monsters contributed by our readers. We abandoned our "must run a monster in every issue" approach after that — and a lot of you have told us since then that you want the Bestiary back. Well, we haven't done that, but we've put together something that's a lot better than the next best thing. In the center 20 pages of this 112-page issue is the Creature Catalog, a collection of 29 reader-submitted monsters that should whet the appetites of those of you who've been asking, "Where's the beast?" for the last 2½ years.

We expect the Creature Catalog to be popular. We expect some of you to write up and send in your new monster creations after seeing it. And if those two expectations come to pass, we'll plan on putting out other editions of the Catalog in the months and years to come.

Speaking of popular, this issue's cover art has probably knocked your socks off already. For those of you who've been buried under a mound of dice for the last six months, "Check" is the third and final element in the series of chess-oriented fantasy paintings from Denis Beauvais. "Checkmate" and "Stalemate," which adorned issues #83 and #86 respectively, were two of the most well-received covers in our history, and we're pretty sure that "Check" will be regarded right up there with the other two.

Now that the front-and-center talk is over, I've got precious little space left to mention all the other great stuff in the table of contents. "Something for everyone" is a tough label to live up to, but we'll probably never come any closer than in this issue. You want magic items? Check out Ed Greenwood's "Six very special shields" on page 14. You want a new NPC? Andy Pierce's sentinel is standing guard on page 34. You want theory? See Stephen Inniss's essay "Survival is a group effort" on page 8. You want theory that's put into practice? Flip to page 48 for "What is a monster worth?" by Roger Moore.

The next installment of Len Lakofka's series on the deities of the Suel pantheon features Pyremius, Beltar and Llerg. In response to one of our "wish list" topics (#82), Charles Olsen expounds on "The many types of magic" in the AD&D game.

We managed to squeeze in articles on the TOP SECRET® and DRAGONQUEST™ games, plus features on four SF/superhero games in the ARES™ Science Fiction Section, plus our usual excursion into fiction. And for something unusual, grab a pencil with a big eraser and try to tackle "Monster in the Middle," the best crossword puzzle with a gaming connection that we've ever been offered. Well, of course it's not an easy puzzle: What do you think we think you are? — KM



## We can't re-cover

Dear Dragon,

Over the years of reading DRAGON, I've been pleased to see such a high degree of excellence in the cover art for the magazine. What I would like to see is an opportunity, once a year, to purchase a selection of the most popular covers for the year. The covers offered would be decided by a once yearly mini-survey to find out what covers are the favorites of the readers. Why don't you ask your readers if they would like this? I know it would be complicated, but I think it would be worth it.

David Heys  
Scarborough, Ont., Canada

*We'd like to be able to offer copies of our cover art for sale, for two pretty obvious reasons: The artwork is good stuff, and we could probably make a decent hunk of money by offering prints or posters of the most popular pieces. But we can't do it, for one not-so-obvious reason: We don't have the right to reproduce the paintings in any other form.*

*We purchase first reproduction rights to the cover paintings we publish — we can use the art once, but that's it. The original artwork and all other rights remain the possession of the artist. We could offer to buy the right to make prints or posters, but chances are that many of the artists we work with wouldn't be willing to sell those rights — and those who did agree would (quite rightfully) want a lot more money.*

*David and all the other people who've written letters to us on this subject seem to be under the mistaken impression that we own the cover art we publish. I honestly wish we did, but such is not the case. Unfortunately, we'll all have to be satisfied with seeing the artwork on the cover and nowhere else, unless the creator of a painting takes matters into his or her own hands and markets prints or posters independently. If we ever get word that one of our covers is being offered for sale like this, you can be sure we'll let you know. — KM*

## Merle's reaction

Dear Editor,

I want to thank you and your staff for the great-looking TOP SECRET® adventure produced in DRAGON #87, *Operation: Whiteout*.

Whiteout was used as the RPGA™ TOP SECRET Tournament adventure at last year's GEN CON® XVI Convention. Only one of the 12 competing six-person teams completed the mission in the given time. I appreciate the help of all the event's judges. A plaque was given to Mike Taglianetti, who was voted the best role-player on the highest-scoring team. Mike's team members were Bryan Robert, Pat Kushel, Kevin Price, Ron Sladon, and Mike Thomas.

The fuel oil barrels on the main complex

surface level map did not reproduce well. I can only see 12 barrels indicated by the tiny unlabelled specks. There should be a total of 20 barrels. One barrel should stand diagonally three squares from each corner of the main complex. The other four barrels not shown should stand 30 feet away from the main complex between Quonset huts numbers 2 and 3, 6 and 7, 10 and 11, and 14 and 15.

For those agents who can afford their own equipment, I offer the following prices: inexpensive parka, \$111; moderately priced parka, \$333; expensive parka, \$1000; custom-fit parka, \$3000; space suit, \$9000.

I would like to acknowledge the original *Whiteout* playtesters: Mark Elliott, Chris Johansen, Eric Nelson, Scott Nelson, and Mark Ryerson. Initial development and title credit should go to James "Pong" Thompson.

Merle M. Rasmussen  
Huxley, Iowa

## Rakshasa ruling

Dear Dragon,

I was very pleased with "Never the same thing twice" in issue #84. However, there is one thing that troubles me.

When describing a rakshasa knight, the author said that rakshasa knights despise paladins and receive a bonus of +1 to hit and +2 hit points of damage per attack. Later in the article, under the editor's note, it says that rakshasas are considered to be creatures of the outer planes just as demons and devils are. If this is true, how could a rakshasa knight gain any bonuses to hit or damage a paladin in combat when paladins radiate a continual protection from evil? Wouldn't this protection prevent any contact in the first place?

Owen Seyler  
Camp Hill, Pa.

*If a rakshasa knight was summoned from the Outer Planes to attack a paladin, then it would not be able to do so. However, some rakshasa knights (like other forms of rakshasas) dwell naturally upon the Prime Material Plane, and thus could not be considered summoned or conjured. Rakshasas are not truly "outer planes" monsters in the sense that demons are. Also, a paladin lighting a rakshasa on Acheron (the plane suggested by the author as the creatures' home plane) would not get the benefit of his protection from evil aura, since the innate evilness of the plane itself would negate it. — RM*

## Adept at arguing

Dear Dragon,

Craig Barrett's article "The warrior alternative" in #86 was so ill-thought-out that I question his knowledge of the rules.

In the *DragonQuest* game, a non-Adept char-

acter gets a Magical Resistance benefit of +20 that an Adept does not get. This is reason enough for me to be a non-Adept. This gives about a one-third chance of resisting a spell by a character with an average Willpower.

Also, an Adept cannot wear iron armor or use iron weapons. He must wield either very expensive weapons mixed with precious metals, use naturally non-iron weapons (of which there aren't that many), or use cheap wood, bone, or bronze ones. Added to the fact that beginning Adepts are not very well protected is the fact that most of their spells must be cast at a very low percentage. So a beginning Adept is very weak, and making non-Adepts 6500 experience points stronger is no answer. This is giving the equivalent of six to eleven adventures worth of experience!

Mr. Barrett's remark about getting a language at Rank 8 for 100 EP is just not the case. Rule 8.6 clearly states that the expenditure gains one skill at Rank 0 and Rule 49.6 refers only to languages that are native to the character. I'm all for making the most out of the rules, but not at the expense of warping the intent of the designers.

I think you need a DQ expert on your staff to weed out the articles that have no business being printed in a respectable magazine.

Steve Krebs  
Fair Oaks, Calif.

*Because we don't have a DQ expert on our staff, we forwarded a copy of Steve's letter to Craig Barrett; his response is below. And, for the record, we still consider Craig to be a knowledgeable and imaginative source for material on the DRAGONQUEST™ game. For proof of that, one need look no farther than page 42 of this magazine. — KM*

In reply to Mr. Krebs' criticism of "The warrior alternative," and before getting into specifics, let me draw attention to Rule 2.1: Here the designers themselves state that they do not consider their own rules to be sacrosanct. Rules are guidelines, not shackles. I particularly emphasize the point that rules are intended to let players and GMs "speak the same language and have some base from which their ideas may spring."

Now, to specifics. Mr. Krebs is accurate in saying that Rule 31.4 gives a non-Adept character a +20 defense against magic, which Adepts do not get. Also, Adepts are, indeed, penalized in their use of cold iron weapons, armor, and tools, under Rule 29.1. But that rule does *not* prohibit Adepts from using cold iron, it simply prohibits them from using College Talent magic and from preparing spells or performing rituals while in physical contact with a significant amount of cold iron. The distinction is important.

It also apparently escapes Mr. Krebs' attention that the major concern of the article was not the relative strength of the Adept and the non-Adept at the moment they set out on their first adventure. I clearly stated that the non-Adept who chooses to accept the option offered in the article is going to receive immediate martial advantages, as compensation for losing intermediate and long-range magical advantages. The GM who thinks this is unfair can always disallow it in his own campaign.

What the GM cannot disallow, and which Mr. Krebs would realize if he would look a little further down the road, is that the very 6,500 EPs that he objects to giving the non-Adept at the game's outset have already been given to the Adept (and withheld from the non-Adept) at the game's outset. This is an inequity that will have to be accounted for sooner or later.

Let me illustrate: Suppose that at the end of an

unspecified number of adventures, we have an Adept and a non-Adept who each have earned 6,500 EPs. The Adept will take time out to spend these EPs on various magical, career, and weapon skills. When he's finished, he will be much more powerful than before. The non-Adept, having decided he needs to know magic, prefers to enter a magical College (as the game allows — see Rules 34.5, 44.0, 46.0), expending his time and EPs in learning basic magic. When he's finished with this, he will be at exactly the same position that the Adept was when the campaign first began!

This is an oversimplification, but however you view the situation, the balance between the Adept and the non-Adept is hardly equitable. Eric Goldberg's article in Chaosium's *Thieves' World* gives the clear implication that the non-Adept must be charged something for entering a magical College, just as it establishes that the cost must be more than 5,000 EPs and less than 7,500 EPs. If this is so, then the Adept must have been charged a similar amount when he went through a magical College before the campaign began. Where did he get these EPs? If he was given them to spend on the magical College of his choice, why wasn't the non-Adept given the same amount of EPs to spend as he chose?

If it's the specific number of EPs that Mr. Krebs objects to, he's entirely at liberty to tinker with the 6,500 number as he chooses, to suit his campaign. But I do not think it can be justified to give the non-Adept no EPs at all — not when the Adept has apparently had the use of something between 5,000 and 7,500 EPs.

My own solution in the article is an attempt to let the player decide for himself just how his PC was training for the adventures ahead, during the months and years prior to the beginning of the campaign. The player also has an opportunity to define something of his PC's personality by how he chooses to spend the 6,500 EPs that I offer.

I make no claim that "The warrior alternative" is definitive, nor that any suggestions should be chiseled in granite for the erudition of future generations. If Mr. Krebs or anyone else can come up with a better solution to this problem, I'm reasonably sure that the editors of DRAGON would be interested in seeing it — and I know I would be.

As regards my use of Rules 8.6 and 49.6 to give a beginning character the skill to either Speak or Read and Write a language at Rank 8, I feel that this is entirely within the boundaries of designer intent. Rule 8.6 specifies that if a PC has 100 EPs to spend, he can use them to acquire any one skill at Rank 0. The Speak and Read and Write skills are among those that can be chosen. Either can be selected before the campaign begins (again, Rule 8.6), and Rule 49.6 states that if any character "begins with the ability to speak or read and write in a language, his Rank in that skill is presumed to be 8." What could be more obvious than this?

As for "languages that are native to the character," such may be alluded to in Rule 49.0, but these words are certainly not used in Rule 49.6, and nothing in the entire section suggests that they should be. Unless, of course, you wish to assume that any languages a character obtains (through gift or purchase) before the campaign begins are native to the character. . . .

To go beyond such deductions, into the realm of absolute certainty, requires access to special knowledge. Not being presently well-versed in telepathy, and so unable to read the designers' minds, I do not have such access. Neither, I suspect, does Mr. Krebs.

Craig Barrett  
Las Vegas, Nev.

## Helmet hints

Dear Dragon,

I have a few questions concerning the Dragonhelm, one of the new magical items in issue #86. If a paladin is the wearer of the helm, and he/she starts becoming selfish and begins developing other "evil" traits, will this strip the paladin of his/her benefits as a paladin?

Can an *exorcise* or *wish* spell negate the megalomania or charm effects given to the wearer of the helm?

Finally, if a dragon notices the helm on a person, will it attempt to charm the person right away? If the wearer is not commanded by the dragon to do anything (or charmed), can the wearer then leave, or is the wearer charmed as soon as encountered, even if he/she isn't commanded to do anything?

Jeremy Groce  
De Smet, S.D.

*If a paladin wears the dragonhelm, he will become aware that his personality is changing as a result of his use of the helm. At that point, the paladin can discard the helm to keep from losing his paladinhood.*

*A wish or heal spell would remove the insanity that the helm can cause, but no spell can remove the possibility that the helm will continue to cause insanity or make the wearer susceptible to charming when he sees a dragon, without destroying all of the helm's powers.*

*Even if the dragon encountered doesn't ask the wearer to do anything, the wearer will do absolutely anything he can to prevent the dragon from being cheated, coming to harm, or even being spoken to rudely by anyone. The wearer may leave, but will generally not want to go away without making sure the dragon is doing well, and may even want to talk to it. If the dragon sees the helm, it will do all it can to take advantage of the situation in its own best interests (which won't necessarily be anyone else's best interests). — RM*

## 'Missing' facts

Dear Dragon,

In reference articles, and the "ecology of" feature, you sometimes leave us hanging with very interesting and (to say the least) valuable information by stating that alchemists or other officials on the specific subject have not conducted experiments (or observations) or had negative results on the experiments they did conduct.

So, my suggestion to you is to maybe update the facts and statistics in the form of new magical and biological breakthroughs. My fellow AD&D players and I would be very grateful.

Elan Cole  
Huntington, N.Y.

*To address this subject clearly and honestly, we have to leave the realm of fantasy as it applies to gaming and enter the world of reality as it applies to writing. I'll use the ecology articles as a general example, and try to explain why some of the "facts" can't be pinned down.*

*A writer who tries to fill in details about an obscure or complicated creature sometimes doesn't have a lot to go on, and logical reasoning can only carry a theory so far. If a writer characterizes a certain piece of information as unknown or undetermined, that usually means he wasn't*

(Turn to page 92)



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# The forum

## Opinions and observations

David Godwin's letter in issue #87 points out several problems with upper level campaigns — outrageously high levels, attacking deities, and automatic hits. There are, indeed, alternatives to trashing characters or switching to other game systems. These include:

**Levels:** In addition to avoiding Monty Haul type adventures, a good DM can slow down unduly rapid advancement by not allowing full XP for overly easy activities. My 12th level monk (a level gained after 6 years of playing) rarely gets XP for kobolds, goblins, centipedes, etc. Since it's too easy, the DM just tosses such things in when random rolls insist on it. By allowing fewer XP for easily obtained gold, the characters can also have slowed advancement. Using reduced XP for easy conquests and rare XP-producing encounters, players can play for years between levels. And a creative DM can make the game interesting without raising PC levels each game.

**Attacks:** As to Mr. Godwin's comments about automatic hits, I'd like to point out that a roll of 1 is always a miss/failure (DMG p. 79).

**Deities:** I keep hearing about groups attacking deities, and am constantly amazed by DMs who allow this activity to happen. The DEITIES & DEMIGODS book lists several ways in which any mortal party (and even 17th level characters are mortal) can be stopped. Awe and Horror (p. 7) would stop the party long enough for the deity to use *command* (with no saving throw), *quest* (also without a saving throw), or *geas* to send them away; or *gate* to bring in reinforcements; or *teleport* to leave. Of course, *true seeing* would allow the deity to see any attackers. All of these abilities are standard for all deities (p. 8) and seem to be enough to handle any attacks without calling for use of a deity's specific abilities.

As I stated earlier, I play a 12th level monk in a campaign in which the PCs are all 10th through 12th level. An interesting thing has happened. Once a character reaches 10th level, he/she becomes less fun to play. The fun is getting a character through danger safely. Once the character can take on a dragon single-handed, it's best retired. My monk teaches new monks at his own monastery and comes out only when an exceptionally strong foe presents himself. Otherwise I now play mostly lower level characters (henchmen of Rykor's) and love every minute.

If you want an invulnerable character, fine. But I don't feel 17th level deity-killers to be where the AD&D game is at.

Bob Kindel  
Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio

\* \* \* \*

In issue #87, I was *stunned* (as per the MU spell) by David Godwin's letter saying that Monty Haul campaigns are built into the AD&D game, and not merely the result of careless DMs or overbearing players. Admittedly, the examples he gave (possibly characters in his campaign from the sound of it) are formidable, but a good DM could probably deal with them with a variety of solutions.

However, such "solutions" would only be temporary. There does come a point (I believe Mr. Godwin has reached it already) when it simply is time for the players to give up their characters and start anew. Of course, the cam-

paign does not need to be scrapped, and whatever the DM has concocted can and should be kept. Also, there are ways of letting a character down gently (mentioned in the rules, I might add). The most simple answer is for them to settle down and establish a stronghold, guild, or whatever and simply sit back and let the money roll in. Another solution, generally reserved for the "creme de la creme," is godhood. This not only adds originality to the campaign, but also is less of a blow to the players. Who wouldn't like to have his character worshiped?

Another misconception I would like to clear up is that of the gods. Deities are *not* meant to be just more beasts for bored players. When players are "going through pantheons," and "beefing up the deities" is considered a solution to mega-powerful characters, I'd say that the DM does not understand the purpose of the gods. Deities are merely meant to be worshiped and called on for help in extreme situations (also, deities often help flesh out a character, particularly clerics). It should be kept in mind that even the loss of *one* deity could seriously unbalance the game.

Edgar W. Francis IV  
North Truro, Mass.

\* \* \* \*

There's been a lot of controversy in the gaming hobby over those FRP games where the players run evil PCs and get their thrills by performing heinous deeds and disgusting acts. I don't mean ordinary games where some of the PCs have such human but unendearing traits like vanity, selfishness, and a hunger for power; I mean games where most or all PCs are dedicated to downright Evil with a capital E.

Although there are too many arguments against playing evil campaigns for me to review all of them here, I can easily sum up the defense offered by those who advocate evil campaigns. I have yet to read or hear anyone defending their involvement in evil campaigns who has any valid point but this one: Everyone is taking our games too seriously; it's just a game, and we're only doing it for fun.

On the surface, this defense seems reasonable. After all, in ordinary FRP games there's lots of violence, supernatural forces, and peculiar religions, all of which have made many non-gamers attack and condemn our hobby. Even though these critics refuse to see it, we all know that "it's just a game," make-believe and let's pretend. Why should the rest of us similarly condemn the players of evil PCs? So they've tortured a paladin or two; the rest of us have all slaughtered dozens of orcs. Surely those players wouldn't torture anyone in real life. Aren't the rest of us just being hypocrites?

No, we're not. The "it's just a game" defense begs one very important question: Just why do the players of evil PCs enjoy the sufferings of those who in no way deserve pain and death? Role-playing involves what the name implies — acting out roles, giving life to our deepest fantasies. Whether they like it or not, evil-style players are revealing that they enjoy fantasies of inflicting suffering upon the innocent and that they fantasize about wanting power so much that they don't care how they get it.

Let me make clear right now what I am *not* saying. I am not viewing these evil campaigns from a moral or religious standpoint. Since I'm far from a religious person, I have no right to say that these games are "bad" or "impious" in an absolute sense. Since the games don't harm other people, no more can I condemn them on the basis of secular morality. Finally, never would I claim that the players of these games are in any way more "evil" than the rest of us. Except for a few saints, every human being has thoughts, impulses, and fantasies that can be called evil.

What I *am* talking about is psychology. Although everyone has evil impulses at times, few of us give these impulses a lovingly detailed expression in our games, nor do we spend long hours dwelling upon and cultivating this side of our personality as do the players in evil campaigns. I maintain that spending all that time pretending to be evil is dangerous to the players themselves.

First of all, let's consider why such evil-style players are fascinated enough with evil to develop campaigns around it. Psychologists have done many studies about people who read violent books and watch violent and amoral movies to the exclusion of other kinds of entertainment. They've found that violence and evil seem glamorous to people who feel angry, and thus want to hurt someone else the way they've been hurt, and who feel weak and powerless in their own lives. Fantasizing about being powerful, ruthless, and evil is a compensation for something that the fantasizer lacks in reality. Rather than being a sign of strength, a preoccupation with evil is a sign of weakness. When a gaming group gets together to develop an evil campaign, they are sharing their weaknesses and reinforcing them.

Even normal FRP games have a certain element of compensation, of course. Life is never perfect, and we live today in troubled times. When we feel that we can't do anything about nuclear war or our boring job, it's very satisfying to go into the game world and kill those lousy orcs who are threatening the peaceful village. Our mental image of the head orc may even bear a marked resemblance to our boss or some political figure. Since we can't kill the troublemaker in real life (and in fact, wouldn't even want to), this kind of compensation is healthy. At least in our fantasies, we can take the side of the good and deal decisively with problems that we can't touch in real life.

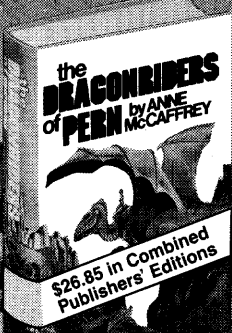
For the players in evil campaigns, however, the release of being the good guys simply isn't enough. They want to wreak havoc, not merely let off a little steam — a sign that their anger and pain run very deep indeed. In a way, the decision to play evil PCs is a sign of despair, an indication that the players feel that evil is stronger than good, that the good can't really score any lasting or satisfactory victories, and that the individual might as well stop fighting and get what he can for himself.

Previously I called this style of game dangerous. One of the dangers is simply that by releasing a bit of their feelings of weakness in their games, the players will feel no need to deal with their real problems. A much greater danger, however, is that these things snowball. Rather than releasing and getting rid of evil impulses, dwelling on an evil campaign tends to strengthen them simply because of the way any role-playing game develops.

We all remember our first few FRP sessions, where killing a giant rat or a couple of orcs was a real thrill and felt really dangerous. As we gained experience and skill, we needed greater challenges to reproduce that same feeling of excitement.

(Turn to page 92)

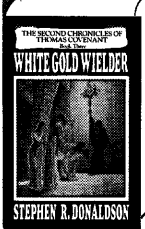





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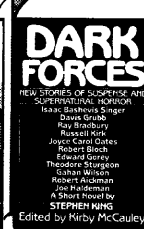
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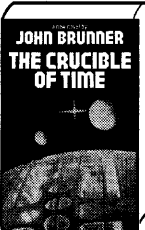
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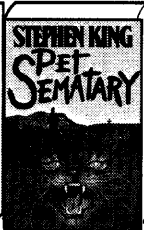
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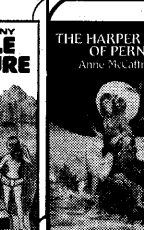
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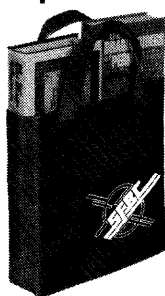
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# Survival is a group effort

## The effects of population growth and regrowth

by Stephen Inniss

An AD&D® game world is usually one of action and tumult. Humanoid armies meet human and demi-human forces regularly in mortal combat. Countries are invaded and their inhabitants are killed or driven off. Magical or natural disasters lay waste to large areas at least once every millennium. Monsters hunt travelers in the wilderness, and are in turn hunted by other monsters or by adventurers.

True, there are safe places in the world, but they are usually preserved by force of arms and magic, or because they are isolated and perhaps occupy an undesirable position (such as in the middle of a swamp). Many of these backwaters are poor lands, where starvation is enemy enough. Immortality is only for the gods, and not even for all of them.

This is as it should be for an exciting campaign. Adventurers are naturally found with trouble and change. There is, however, the question of replacement. Where do the hordes of humanoids come from, those that spring up to kill and be killed time and time again? How do the humans and demi-humans make up their inevitable losses? What of the other inhabitants of the world, from brownies and beholders to wyverns and worgs? Presumably their populations grow in the same way that populations do in the real world, unless they are somehow spontaneously generated by the natural and supernatural forces that surround them. This has some interesting corollaries.

The Dungeon Masters Guide contains (on p. 13) a table indicating that the humanlike races in an AD&D game world grow and develop more or less in proportion to how long they live: a century-old elf is equivalent to a human teenager, while a half-orc is full grown well before twenty years of age and past the prime of life at thirty. Combining this information with that on lifespans from the Monster Manual, the "age categories" data in the DMG can be expanded to include some of the humanoids; see the table below.

The proportion of its life that each humanoid spends in the age categories given is based on the proportions given for a half-orc. This should be about right for most of these humanoids, except in the case of kobolds; for reasons to be explained later, they probably reach the young adult stage much sooner than this table indicates. Leaving kobolds aside for the moment, look at the figures for gnolls and orcs. A gnoll is ready to reproduce by the age of 7, and an orc at the age of 8. The others are not far behind, with the exception of the two larger creatures, bugbears and ogres. This early maturity has important implications for the balance of power and numbers in an AD&D game world.

The growth potential of a population depends primarily on its generation time — the average period between the birth of a female and the birth of her female offspring. (Males are not considered in this calculation, since they do not represent the rate-limiting factor in population growth.) This means that populations in which females reproduce earlier will grow more quickly. The counter-intuitive effect of this is that a population of long-lived but slowly maturing creatures will grow more slowly than a population of short-lived but more quickly maturing ones.

For instance, if a female high elf were to have a child every year of her reproductive life (from about 100 to 550 years of age), she would have hundreds of daughters. This is, of course, a ridiculously high number; aside from the physical strain of those centuries of pregnancies and births, imagine the difficulty of caring for dozens of elven children at the same time — none of them even out of diapers before the age of 10! It might be expected that with such a huge increase in population per generation, elves would soon outstrip the other humans and demi-humans in number. Actually, such busy and healthy elves as these would still not increase so quickly as a normal human population can. While the elves steadily

increase their numbers, year by year and century by century, the humans have children, who will soon have children, who will soon have even more children . . . and the multiplication effect wins out. The mathematical expression of this tendency, well known to ecologists, is:

$$r = \frac{\log_e (F)}{G}$$

where  $r$  is the rate of a population's increase over time,  $F$  is the number of new females per female in a generation, and  $G$  is the generation time. (The log, function, or natural logarithm, sometimes written as  $\ln$ , is found on many calculators these days, or failing that, in the back of a mathematics textbook.) The aforementioned production-line elves, according to this equation, would increase in number by about 2% per year, doubling their population every 42 years or so. To achieve this rate, humans needn't put out nearly so much effort. With early marriage, and families of quite modest size (three surviving children), they easily outstrip the elves. Orcs could do this even more easily.

Of course, a very large change in the number of surviving offspring will have some effect. If the value of  $F$  is exactly 1 (simple replacement), the population will remain stable and not grow at all — the phenomenon known as zero population growth. If  $F$  falls below 1, the population will actually decrease, in which case the longer-lived species are favored by a slower decline.

Fertility and mortality will affect a population's  $F$  value, but one or both must change drastically to counteract the effect of generation time. For instance, it is apparent from the ratio of adult males to females in most humanoid tribes that only half as many females reach maturity as do males. Given the nature of the creatures in question, this may be due to the practice of selective infanticide by male humanoids who are impatient for warrior sons — a practice not unknown in human societies of the real world. The killing of half of the female infants born, while perhaps favorable to the individual males involved, cuts the tribe's growth rate per generation in half, striking directly at the potential child-bearers. Its effect on the overall growth rate of a given humanoid population is to bring it down to near-human levels. Similarly, even though dwarves and gnomes have half as many adult females as males (presumably a natural trait rather than an imposed one),

### Age Categories:

Species	Young Adult	Mature	Middle Aged	Old	Venerable
Bugbear	15-20	21-35	36-55	56-75	76-100
Gnoll	7-10	11-20	21-25	26-35	36-45
Goblin	10-12	13-25	26-35	36-50	51-65
Hobgoblin	12-15	16-30	31-45	46-60	61-80
Kobold	20-30	31-65	66-100	101-135	136-180
Ogre	14-20	21-40	41-60	61-90	91-120
Orc	8-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41-55



dwarven and gnomish communities still have a good deal more growth potential than elvish ones.

The effects of generation time can be seen every day in the real world. Organisms with relatively short generation times, like insects, rodents, or dandelions, can survive determined attempts at their extermination, since only a few individuals need to survive to fuel a population explosion when favorable conditions return. On the other hand, those with long generation times, such as whales, albatrosses, or giant sequoia trees, may take long years to recover from a major setback in their numbers. Such effects cannot be avoided or ignored in a self-consistent fantasy world, either. Alchemy may replace chemistry, the world may be flat instead of round, and the elements may be mythic ones rather than scientific, but numbers remain the same. Just as insects can appear in hordes on incredibly short notice, so can orcs, and just as oak trees might take centuries to rebuild their population, so do elves.

It must be admitted that a population's growth potential is not the sole predictor of abundance and success. Oaks may take hundreds of times as long to mature as dandelions do, but they can still dominate forests. There are many other factors to consider here, particularly those related to the competitive ability of a species compared to others trying for the ecological niche. Growth rate is highly significant, however, under unstable conditions in which a population must recover from periodic disasters. Droughts, forest fires, earthquakes, floods, wars, and other catastrophes favor a species which has a short generation time, since it will tend to fill the gaps left by less prolific competitors. In this way, grasses and weeds can dominate an area that is periodically swept by fire, even if they would otherwise be shaded out by taller plants.

All of this has particular relevance for the inhabitants of an AD&D game world in which many intelligent species may be in competition for the same real estate. In the turbulent times in which most adventurers live, a short generation time can be a great advantage. This is especially true of the humanlike species, who may become involved in long-term wars of near genocidal scope, such as those between gnomes and kobolds, between dwarves and hill giants, and between dwarves and orcs.

On the whole, the conclusions that can be drawn from the above information mesh surprisingly well with the campaign background of most AD&D game worlds, with information given or implied in the various official books, and in particular with events and conditions in the archetypal AD&D game campaign, the **WORLD OF GREY-HAWK™** Fantasy Game Setting. In fact, a number of otherwise inexplicable events are accounted for by these assumptions, and new gaming possibilities are opened up.

It is not surprising that in uncertain and chaotic times the humans and humanoids

have spread, while demi-humans have at best merely held their ground. Demi-humans are most commonly found in relative backwaters like forests and hills, where conditions are politically stable because of the difficulty of invading such territory. Naturally, this is most notable in the slowly maturing elves and gnomes. Dwarves and halflings are more likely to be found in the mainstream of society, though even there they are most common in peaceful areas. Within their enclaves, demi-humans may be quite common since they have significant competitive advantages over the average human or humanoids.

The conflict between humanoids and demi-humans is traceable to more than just alignment differences. Perhaps coincidentally, it is a conflict between two very different life strategies. Like insects and rodents, humanoids depend primarily on their short generation times for survival. They are natural colonists. If lands are emptied by war or pestilence, they will fill them up quickly and be firmly entrenched by the time otherwise superior competitors arrive. Demi-humans, on the other hand, are superior in almost every field of species competition except reproduction; they are generally more intelligent, are more willing to help one another, have more special skills, and produce more powerful and unique individuals than the humanoid races do. Demi-humans thrive under conditions of peaceful competition. Unfortunately,

such "high-quality material" cannot be replaced quickly. Over time, humanoids are favored by conditions of cataclysm and violent confrontation, which by their very natures humanoids tend to bring about.

When it comes to war, the demi-humans seem to do well. A few elven wizards with *fireball* spells can destroy a tribe of orcs; an ambush by halfling archers in the woods can lay low a whole company of hobgoblins; goblin heads may roll by the dozens under dwarven attack. All of this is in vain, because in a decade or two the humanoids will be back. The contest between demi-humans and humanoids is like that between a fighter and a troll; the troll's wounds heal in minutes, while its opponent must wait days or weeks. The only successful course of action for the fighter, other than to retreat, is to strike harder and more often than the troll, and most importantly to ensure that no small piece of the troll remains undestroyed to regenerate the monster. Despite the casualties they inflict, demi-humans cannot maintain a long war. They must win quickly or not at all, and they must win *completely*. Their warriors will learn through bitter personal experience that each humanoid survivor signifies dozens more to be dealt with in the years ahead. The image of a few brave individuals holding back thousands of the enemy, inflicting great damage but still doomed to lose, is a frequently appearing one in fantasy literature. It must appear with depressing frequency in

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3. Heightened Defense: -4 to be hit

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**Weight: 130 lbs.**  
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Endurance: 13  
Agility: 13  
Intelligence: 12  
Charisma: 15  
Dam. Mod.: +1  
Accuracy: +1  
Hit Points: 9  
Heal: 9  
Car. Cap.: 351  
Basic HTH: 1d6  
Power: 54  
Movement: 42"  
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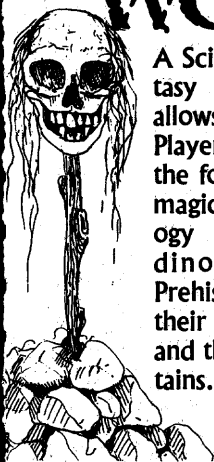
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the history of demi-humans as well.

Humans, intermediate between humanoids and demi-humans in both alignment and in their reproductive abilities, as well as in their talents, are not unnaturally found on both sides of the conflict between humanoids and demi-humans. Overall, they seem to have the best of both worlds, since they reproduce almost as quickly as humanoids and can produce at least as many exceptional individuals as do the demi-humans. This may explain their success in both war and peace, while the demi-humans must diminish in number if they cannot achieve both victory and stability.

The short generation time of most humanoids explains how they can survive seemingly crippling mortality rates and still be in no danger of extinction. Losses from disease, malnutrition, infanticide, or warfare are unimportant; life is cheap. So long as a few tribes or individuals survive in some dark corner of the world, there will be new hordes every few decades. From this viewpoint, the larger and more individually dangerous humanoids such as bugbears and ogres are less of a threat than their weaker brethren, because they have a slower rate of reproduction and replenishment among their populations.

Humanoid societies that are guided by superior leaders are generally more prominent than those not possessing the same characteristic. This prominence may be due to more than good military generalship; it

may have more to do with the fact that an intelligent commander can see, with no calculations, that more warriors will ultimately be raised if female children are spared. If he is so foresighted and can enforce penalties against infanticide, the reproductive power of a humanoid tribe is greatly increased. This is itself a more terrible weapon than any strategy or spell that could be employed on the battlefield. With sufficient food, a humanoid army can be raised almost overnight (in relative terms) and unleashed upon opponents before they are aware of their predicament. It is interesting to note that hobgoblins do not have the characteristic shortage of females found among other humanoids. This may be due to the greater intelligence of their leaders.

An enigma concerning dragons is neatly explained by generation time effects: namely, why dragons have not overrun a world that is, from their point of view, one large hunting ground. Hundreds of humans and other short-lived creatures might die before the elimination of a single dragon, but each dragon lost is a serious blow to the next generation of their kind. By the time a replacement is full grown, the dragons' opponents will have long ago recovered their losses. It is not at all surprising that dragons tend to live in out-of-the-way places and guard their offspring as zealously as they do their gold.

Though the undead do not reproduce in the normal way, some are able to propagate

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themselves by attacking living creatures. In this they have the equivalent of a very short generation time — potentially as short as a few days or even minutes. This opens up some interesting possibilities. A vampire with its minions might be able to take over a whole village before news of the deed spread to the outside world. If the vampire were a particularly ambitious one, rescuers might arrive to find the place deserted, its inhabitants having left to find more "food." Whole nations of undead might arise in this way. This ability explains in part how vampires, spectres, and the like can survive despite their vulnerability to such things as clerics, holy water, and sunlight. Fortunately, the undead are sharply limited in their potential for expansion; once the supply of victims runs out (or runs away), a group of undead creatures can grow no further.

Lycanthropes can reproduce themselves by infection, the disease taking hold in a relatively short time. Again, they have the equivalent of a very short generation time in this power. If lycanthropy is hereditary as well, so that the supply of uninfected humans is not limiting, it is difficult to see why the werebeasts have not spread further than the Monster Manuals indicate. Though less dangerous individually than the undead, lycanthropes are much better at concealing their presence from human populations. Their relative scarcity may be due in part to their tendency to withdraw from human society. Some lycanthropes such as wererats, though, live near normal human populations. Perhaps they refrain from drawing attention to themselves out of fear of human adventurers, or perhaps they prefer to eat their victims rather than infect them. Perhaps they have qualms about inflicting lycanthropy on unwilling victims — even an evil lycanthrope can see that the more lycanthropes there are, the fewer humans there are to eat. An interesting alternative hypothesis is that lycanthropy is a fairly recent addition to one's fantasy world, and is spreading quickly!

By taking generation time into account, a DM can develop additional background information for a campaign. Most large or otherwise dangerous creatures probably have long maturation times, and possibly long lives to match (though low fertility and high mortality might play their parts). Similarly, small and weak creatures, with no other significant defenses, probably mature quickly. Thus, giants of all sorts are probably long-lived and slow to mature in proportion to their size, while xverts probably grow as quickly as goblins. The few creatures specifically described as quick to mature but relatively powerful must have very low fertility or high mortality rates, or both. A good example of these last would be quicklings (see Monster Manual II); with a generation time like theirs, the increase per generation must be very low in order for them to stay rare. Perhaps this is due to high-speed crashes. . . .

In a few cases, the conclusions arrived at

via the generation-time argument seem to contradict official game information or deductions that one may make from the rule books. Despite the figures given for kobolds in the "age categories" table, it seems that they probably reach maturity as quickly as other humanoid species do, instead of following the pattern of the demi-human races as their lifespan of 135 years seems to imply that they do. Certainly, they need the advantage of a short generation time, since they have few other survival advantages. They might reasonably be expected to reach young adulthood before the age of 10 (7 years or earlier might be even better), and then go on to long reproductive lifespans as well. Their ability to lay eggs may enable them to have more young more often as well.

Contrary to the birth tables published in DRAGON® Magazine #70, and contrary to indications in the Monster Manual, it is unlikely that demi-humans will have fewer children per family or community than humans do. There are two reasons for this. The first is that demi-humans will probably try to make up for their small but significant losses against humanoids and evil humans. Though they cannot equal the growth rates of shorter-lived races, having few children per generation only makes matters worse. In terms of game balance, it does no harm to grant demi-humans greater fertility, since there is certainly no danger that they will overrun their rivals. In fact, it

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might help to explain how demi-humans have managed to hold on for so long.

The second reason why demi-humans might have large families is that they have longer fertile lifespans in proportion to the time it takes one of their children to grow up. A human female might have a reproductive life as long as 30 years, or about twice as long as it takes for one of her children to reach early maturity. A high elven female, on the other hand, might be able to bear children throughout a span of 400 years or more, which is at least 4 times as long as it takes an elven child to reach young adulthood. Thus, demi-humans can have more children than humans do and still spend a smaller fraction of their lives raising them. Doubtless they will spend some of this extra effort in providing better care for the children they have, but even so they are likely to have at least as many children as humans do.

It is likely that the behavior of AD&D game characters will be influenced by generation time effects. Paladins, for instance, might not be reluctant to destroy the apparently harmless females and young in a humanoid lair. In fact, such action might well be regarded as a holy duty, to prevent the further spread of evil in the world. Rangers might also demonstrate strong feelings (and similarly strong actions) on the subject; to a lesser extent, so might demi-humans of most alignments. Good characters in general are provided with a more

satisfactory motive than greed or immediate necessity in their forays against evil monsters. The more prolific ones, such as humanoids, must be cut back. The less prolific monsters might be eliminated entirely, or at least so reduced in number that they will not trouble the world for centuries to come.

Ambitious characters of evil alignment will often associate with or make use of humanoids. Since humanoids are easy to replace and are not particularly bright, they make ideal "cannon fodder." (There are no cannons in fantasy, but the principle is the same — "wizard fodder" might be a better term.) It is plain to any evil character that the power of humanoids is ascendant, and it is foolish not to use such power. A bold and intelligent individual, slave to no morality or scruples, can ride the humanoid tide to victory, guiding and controlling it and reaping the rewards of conquest. Personal like or dislike for humanoids has nothing to do with the matter, since the important thing is to be on the winning side and in control. If relationships with humanoids include hate and fear, so much the better. Such emotions add spice to an otherwise rather bland and businesslike arrangement. This point of view may be shared by evil humans and demi-humans alike. The drow, who would be willing to expend cheap humanoid lives in place of their own, are a case in point.

Of course, evil characters will be contemptuous of the bulk of demi-humans, since such races are "obviously" unfit to

survive in a hard world, as is shown by their retreat before more "vital" forces. Out of foolish squeamishness, the demi-humans have tried to stem the humanoid tide rather than control it. Evil half-orcs in particular may be inclined to this point of view. They would be particularly eager to give tottering demi-human groups the final push into oblivion, thereby deriving much profit and pleasure from the action as well as greater safety for themselves and their humanoid followers.

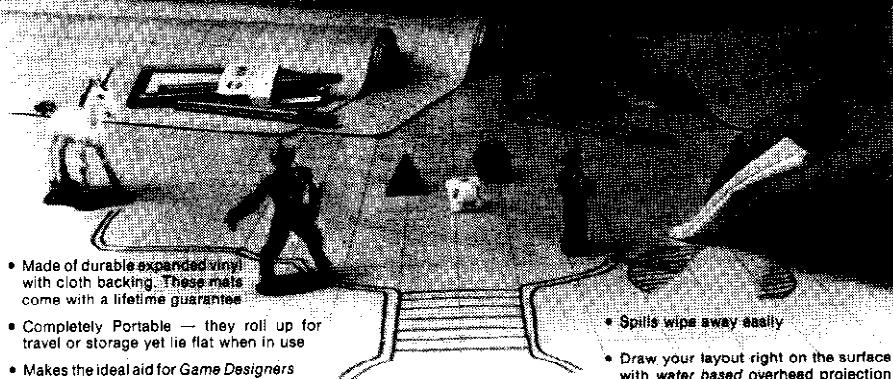
From a druid's viewpoint, there is nothing wrong with humanoids as such except that, like weeds in a garden, they must be periodically rooted out and cut back, lest they threaten the Balance of Neutrality with their numbers. The more dangerous creatures such as evil dragons must be kept rare because of their destructive tendencies. Such corrective action is not needed with demi-humans, since they are less destructive of field and forest and are unlikely to threaten the Balance with uncontrolled expansion.

Other neutral characters may share the druid's point of view; though they may be more strongly influenced by considerations of personal gain. Certainly they will deal with humanoids if this is expedient, but in general the more foresighted persons will act to preserve their neighbors and associates of good alignment in preference to evil ones. This is not altruism; it is simply more pleasant and profitable to deal with well-meaning and uncommon peoples than with numerous and aggressive ones. In general, halflings, elves, or humans of good alignment are easier to live with than ogres or goblins. Unless they think the demi-humans and their allies have no chance, neutral characters will probably support them in interracial conflicts.

The effects of generation time can be as far-reaching in an imaginary world as they are in the real one. If a DM chooses to take them into consideration, they can go a long way toward providing a more detailed and plausible campaign background. m

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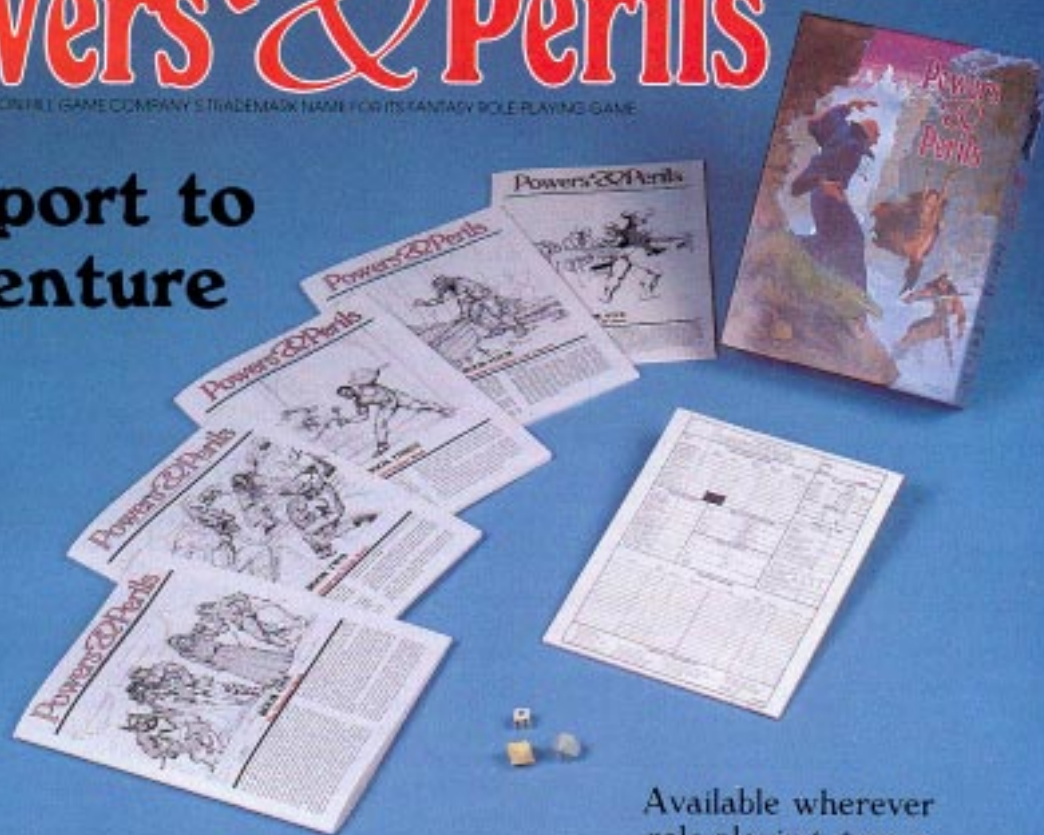
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We trudged through the snow, the cold stabbing my chest with every breath. We spoke little, for up ahead we could now hear our enemy stomping through the snow. The trail curved around a high tower of rock jutting from the right.

"We've cornered him. It's a dead-end," Asteria said softly. I pulled the longsword out. A cornered animal would do anything. Fear would be possible if it didn't lay frozen within me.

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# Six very special shields

## More magic items from the mind of Elminster

by Ed Greenwood

"But ye've *done* swords before! There're more treasures to be had, ye know — but no, no, all that makes younglings' eyes shine is blades, blades, and more blades, the bloodier the better. Phaugh!" Elminster spat into an innocent potted violet beside his chair. Having no safe response, I said nothing. "Why not ask me about goblets, or gauntlets of strange powers, or shields?" the sage grumbled.

He stopped and glowered when he saw my pencil moving (I was scribbling hastily). Dropping the pencil, I pushed a decanter and glass toward him. "Shields?" I asked politely. "You mean there are special magical shields?"

"Of course, ye dolt! What d'ye think stops all those swords of power? Else the Realms'd be ruled by eternally warring bladesmen, an' there'd not be enough men in the lands to take to the field and fall in the slaughter!"

I stifled an impulse to tell Elminster that our earlier discussions about the Realms had given me an impression very close to just that. Instead I said, "Yes, of course. Are any of these shields famous, then, with names and traditions?"

"Aye, but not having quite the romance of the swords, I'll grant," Elminster allowed gruffly, nodding his head. Then he was off and running, flicking from topic to topic with the agility of a grasshopper, late into the night. From his discourse I gleaned news of six magical shields of the Realms, whose whereabouts are currently unknown. (Dungeon Masters should take note that these shields are eminently suitable for use by low-level parties who plan to take on stronger foes.)

### Reptar's Wall

Named for the ranger who once bore it, the *Wall* is a large, heavy shield constructed of iron plates riveted to an iron frame. Its origin, lost in antiquity, is unknown. Two words are engraved on the frame in the common tongue, facing the bearer at eye level when the shield is held ready for battle: "Eiruvan" and "Thammis." The shield is magical, and has the following powers and abilities:

Despite its construction, the *Wall* does not rust or corrode, or conduct heat or cold, its metal remaining inactive. It is a +1 shield, and gives forth no sound when struck or dropped. It does not ring or grate, but is absolutely silent; the heaviest blows falling upon it cannot be heard.

When the bearer (not another creature, nor anyone not wearing the shield slung on an arm, ready for battle) speaks or whispers the word "Eiruvan," the shield and bearer, plus any accoutrements worn and held, become *invisible* to both normal sight and infravision for 2-8 rounds. During this time the shieldbearer moves silently, because of the shield's sound-absorbing qualities, and can move about or strike at opponents while so concealed. A successful attack made on an opponent by the bearer will cause the bearer and shield to immediately become visible.

Carrying an active source of light will not affect the invisibility of the carrier, but the light will be clearly seen and can be used to determine the location of the *invisible* shieldbearer. The casting of *light*, *detect magic*, or *dispel magic* in the area where the *invisible* shieldbearer is suspected to be will never reveal the presence or precise location of the shieldbearer. Once exercised, this power will not work again until 96 turns (16 hours) have elapsed from the cessation of *invisibility*.

The shield's major power, made active when the bearer speaks or whispers the word "Thammis" while wearing the shield slung for use, is the ability to *fly* (as per the magic-user spell) for 2 turns. Shield and bearer, plus any non-living accoutrements of up to 4000 gp weight, are empowered to *fly* at maneuverability class A, with a movement rate as per the spell; the magic also confers full stability for wielding weapons in midair. The flight ability will last until 2 turns have elapsed or the bearer wills it to end, whichever occurs first.

Use of the *fly* power has an unexpected side effect in that at the onset of flight, the nearest magic item or artifact will be permanently drained of one charge, which serves as energy to power the shield. If the nearest item is of a permanent nature and has no charges (e.g., a magical dagger), all of its powers are negated for 4 turns. The item closest to the shield is always affected, regardless of the shieldbearer's wishes. The shieldbearer is usually unaware of the "draining." If no magic item is within 9" of the shield when its *fly* power is activated, the shield's own other abilities — including its sound absorption and +1 bonus — are negated for 6 turns. The *Wall* is directed in flight by the will of its bearer, who must remain in full physical contact with it, or the shield and former bearer will both plummet to the ground; the shield will not *fly* alone.

### Thurbrand's Protector

Named for the fighter who found it in a dragon's hoard, this shield was later sold to King Osbrun of Chessagol, whose treasury and armory were looted six winters ago, some say by magic. The *Protector* vanished in that theft, and its present whereabouts and owner are unknown. This shield is a plain, battered, kite-shaped construction of bronze plates bolted to a sturdy wooden frame. It bears no maker's-mark or inscriptions. It is magical, and has the following powers and abilities:

Any damage that pierces or parts the bronze plates, or cracks through or breaks the wooden frame, is magically *mended* overnight. Minor dents, scratches, and scars are not so repaired. Manual repairs by a blacksmith or the bearer seem to have no effect on the shield.

The *Protector* has all the powers of a +1 ring of protection. In addition, whenever the bearer raps the wooden frame of the *Protector* three times rapidly with a finger or knuckles, the shield will radiate and maintain, through some unknown magical means, a 10' radius *globe of air*, cool and breezeless. This *globe* will withstand the pressures of deep water, *gusts of wind*, and the like without altering its shape or location, remaining centered upon the *Protector*. Large, solid, immobile objects like stone walls will cause the "air bubble" to flatten out along the wall or around the object. Creatures within the *globe of air* cannot drown, suffer harm from poisonous vapors, etc. As many creatures can be protected by the globe as can fit into its area, usually 40 or so, or, if freedom to move and fight is required, 8 or 9 man-sized beings. The air supply can never be "overloaded" or used up.

Most creatures are not physically constrained from entering or leaving the sphere. It seems to keep out only creatures who cannot breathe or move in air (such as living fish), and those who are gaseous in form (air elementals, a vampire in gaseous form, etc.). The *globe of air* persists until the bearer again raps the wood frame thrice; to be effective, such rapping must be on the inner side of the shield, directly on the frame, and the bearer must have the shield slung on his arm or strapped to him.

### Hawkstone's Bulwark

The ranger Hawkstone bore this shield in his war against the giants of the Great Glacier and the beast-men (ogres) of Thar.



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Some time after his death, his grave was violated and all his treasures stolen, among them the blade Durelva and this shield, known in ballads as *Hawkstone's Bulwark*. It is generally believed that Hawkstone won this shield from the hoard of the black dragon Yrindoth. Its origin is as unknown as its present fate.

The shield is a single slab of 2-inch-thick, polished steel of a beautiful blue hue, a fine metal unique in its quality in the Realms. It has the usual two straps within, of black bullhide, and weighs no more than a wooden shield. It has the abilities of a +2 shield, and upon command the shield grows magically into a bridge. (The command word, known through lore but not written anywhere on the shield, is "Bulwark.") The shield will disappear from the bearer's possession and reappear at the start of the following round as a 5-inch-thick span of line steel, 2' wide by 60' long. Its length is not variable, and the change is not always automatic; if the command word is spoken when the *Bulwark* doesn't have enough room to expand, the power will simply fail to function. The bridge will extend out in the direction the bearer of the shield is facing, beginning just in front of the bearer's feet. Once placed, the bridge cannot be moved (although it can be shrunk back to a shield and re-expanded in a different location). It will support up to 5,000 pounds of weight at one time; exceeding that limit will cause it to "collapse" back into a normal

shield (see below), leaving the creatures and objects upon it without any visible means of support.

If its weight capacity is not exceeded, the bridge will remain in that form for 33 days, or until the bearer of the shield holds onto one of the straps and utters the reverse-command word "Krawlub." (When it is in bridge form, the shield's straps are located on the top surface of the bridge at either end.) The shrinking process works essentially the same as the expanding process: the bridge disappears upon utterance of the command word, and at the start of the following round the *Bulwark* reappears at the bearer's feet in shield form.

No magic short of a *limited wish*, *alter reality*, or *wish* will cause the bridge to shrink, shift, break, or otherwise move (although the ground on which it rests could well be affected by *disintegrate*, *dig*, or similar magic). The bridge will conduct heat, electricity, and other similar forms of energy, and in such respects acts as normal metal does.

### Dzance's Guardian

The ranger Dzance found this shield in a chest in the depths of Gauntulgrym, the Lost City; its origin is unknown, but it is thought to be of dwarven manufacture. Dzance's *Journals* tell us of the properties of this item. When he retired from adventuring to live in the Lady's Court at Silvery-

moon, Dzance gave the *Guardian* to Belpir, a young knight of that city. The new owner forthwith went adventuring and has not been seen since. The fates of Belpir and of the *Guardian* are yet a mystery.

The *Guardian* is a "+0 shield," magical in nature but conferring no armor class bonus to its bearer aside from the one-place benefit provided by any shield. However, it has a special defensive power: when worn, it radiates an insubstantial magical energy field that envelops its bearer (and only the bearer) like an aura. Any *magic missile* directed at the *Guardian's* bearer from any direction — not just at the shield — will strike this field and be reflected unerringly straight back at the sender with no damage to the shieldbearer.

This field also absorbs all electrical discharges of natural or magical origin, such as *shocking grasp*, *lightning bolt*, or *chain lightning*, without harm to the bearer. These attacks dissipate gradually and harmlessly if the shield is taken off, but if the shieldbearer can bring the shield into physical contact with a foe within 4 rounds of any such discharge(s), the entire stored electrical energy of the field can be transmitted to the foe (save vs. paralysis for half damage). The bearer will be made immediately aware of this storage and discharge power whenever the field intercepts electrical energy.

When this discharge is activated by the bearer's will, there is a 30% chance that the bearer and shield (but not any companion creatures or foes unless direct, physical contact is present at the time) will be *plane shifted* to a random known plane of existence. This power will be unknown to the bearer until it actually occurs; *identify* and sage-lore will not reveal it.

### Shoon's Buckler

The adventurer Shoon briefly possessed this magical shield. Its true origin is unknown, but he seized it from the body of a slain male drow during a battle deep beneath the Hill of Lost Souls. Amongst the drow, as *speak with the dead* has revealed, the buckler was known as a "blink shield"; it was unique, and its making a mystery. Shoon later gave the shield to the fighter Gorlaung "Blackhelm" in exchange for training; Gorlaung fell in battle with orcs in the Stonelands, and his body was stripped of weapons and valuables by his slayers. The present location of the Buckler is not known.

The *Buckler* is a 1' diameter disk of black metal with a fist grip, all fashioned of one piece, and bearing no inscriptions. Despite its small size, the *Buckler* functions as a +2 shield. Its other easily discernible power is the ability to glow (equal in radiance to a *light* spell) upon the mental command of the bearer; the light dies away to nothing when the bearer wills it to, falls asleep, dies, or loses sanity or consciousness. This power will be discovered whenever a being holding the *Buckler* thinks about the poor light, wishes he could see





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better, or so forth. Whenever the *Buckler* operates thus, three words in the common tongue will appear in small glowing letters around its inside edge: "Tethema," "Sekoe," and "Brund."

If "Tethema" is said aloud by any creature holding the shield, that figure becomes the master of the *Buckler* until another creature holds the shield and repeats the word. Control of the *Buckler* enables a being to override the mental commands of another figure holding the *Buckler* regarding its radiance, even from afar (up to 16" distant). Control also allows the following two powers to be enacted when the master is not touching the *Buckler*, and is up to 16" distant:

If the word "Sekoe" is spoken, the *Buckler* will *levitate* for up to 6 rounds, moving about under the mental direction of the bearer (or the master, if these are two different beings; in that case, the master's commands take precedence). The shield can carry or support up to 600 pounds of weight resting upon it or suspended from it, and any number of creatures or objects can make up this cargo. If its load ever exceeds this limit, the shield will instantly cease to *levitate* for at least 6 rounds and will fall. Thus, the bearer can *levitate* himself up or down at will, and also move horizontally about by pushing off walls, or the *Buckler's* master can from afar move the shield about — plus, perhaps, an unwilling cargo.

If the word "Brund" is spoken by the

master of the *Buckler*, any other active shield powers cease; then the shield and any creature(s) touching it will *blink*, as per the magic-user spell, about the location of the shield when it was activated, until 7 rounds have elapsed or the master wills it to end (whichever occurs first).

These powers can be used repeatedly in consecutive rounds and in any order (although only *levitate* and *light* can be used in combination) if the commands are known. Anyone who discovers the *Buckler* will not be informed of any facts about its operation by any revelation or by magical means short of a *wish*, but must learn them by trial and error. Note that the *blink* power will not function for anyone who discovers the shield until that figure has established himself as the master of the *Buckler* by using the command word "Tethema."


### Grimjaw

Named for the small common tongue inscription found deeply engraved on the inside top rim of the shield, this plain iron shield is dented and blackened, and of normal and unassuming appearance. It bears no rust, and rusting will not affect it regardless of the handling it receives, due to protective magics cast upon it. *Grimjaw* was first identified by the sage Ragefast of Baldur's Gate, as borne by the adventurer Krystus and having a certain awesome power described hereafter. Krystus the

Proud soon met his death at the hands of a dwarven patrol half a world away, in the mountains near Tethyamar, in a dispute over passage through the dwarven mines there. *Grimjaw* is known to have been in the hands of the ruling dwarven clan "Iron House" for many years, but was lost in battle when orcs and evil mages drove out or slew all the dwarves of Tethyamar. The present head of the "Iron House," Ghellin, wishes to regain the shield.

*Grimjaw* confers no magical armor class bonus to its wearer, but it has a powerful ability to affect any magical items that come into direct physical contact with it, regardless of the shieldbearer's wishes. The effects of any single such contact are determined by percentile dice roll, as follows:

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| 01-20 | Item has one charge drained from it by <i>Grimjaw</i> ; if the item has no charges as such, its powers are negated for 3-12 turns.   |
| 21-65 | Item instantly turns and attacks wielder for one round, either striking as if the wielder were attacked by someone of equal class, strength, and level (if a weapon), or firing one charge or magical attack (if a charged staff or similar item). |
| 66-80 | Item has all magical powers and abilities negated for 2-12 rounds.   |
| 81-95 | Item is completely drained of all magical powers forever, as if struck by a <i>rod of cancellation</i> . Artifacts are likely to be unaffected, but may, at the DM's option, <i>teleport</i> away to a random location, with or without wielder.   |
| 96-00 | <i>Grimjaw</i> discharges some of its stored magical energy into the contacting item; the item gains 1-6 additional charges (permanently), or a +1 on "to hit" and damage bonuses for 1-6 turns.   |

If a magical weapon or item is wielded against the shieldbearer, and the item misses the armor class of the shieldbearer by 1 point (i.e., scoring what would have been a hit except for the shield's presence), then it is considered to have struck the shield. 

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From the designers of THIEVES' GUILD

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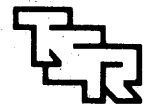
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# Gods of the Suel pantheon

## Fiery Pyremius, nasty Beltar, and bearlike Llerg

by Lenard Lakofka

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### PYREMIUS

God of Fire, Poison, and Murder

#### Lesser God

ARMOR CLASS: -5

MOVE: 15"

HIT POINTS: 170

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-30 (sword), 1-8

(whip), plus strength bonus

SPECIAL ATTACKS: See below

SPECIAL DEFENSES: Immune to

disease, fire, and poison; also see below

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 55% (90% vs.

lightning and electricity)

SIZE: M (6'6" tall)

ALIGNMENT: Neutral evil

WORSHIPER'S ALIGNMENT: Evil,

including many humanoids

SYMBOL: The face of a yagnodaemon

PLANE: Hades

CLERIC/DRUID: 7th level cleric

FIGHTER: 10th level fighter

M-U/ILLUSIONIST: 12th level magic-user

THIEF/ASSASSIN: 5th level assassin

MONK/BARD: 13th level monk

PSIONIC ABILITY: VI

Attack/Defense Modes: Nil

S: 21 (+4, +9) I: 19 W: 19 D: 17

C: 18 Ch: 6 (21)

Pyremius appears as a grotesque man who facially resembles a jermlaine. He has many human worshipers as well as worshipers among the jermlaine, firenewts, and grimlocks (see the FIEND FOLIO® Tome). He can *mass charm* these non-humans at will, and has an effective charisma of 21 in dealings with them.

He wears special *bracers of defense* made of brass that give him his superior armor class. When he is not wearing them, his armor class drops by 10 places to 5. Pyremius will not remove his bracers voluntarily except to loan them to a neutral evil figure who is native to an outer plane. Anyone else who puts them on will see his hands *wither* and fall off (along with the bracers, which cannot then be donned again by the same figure) at the start of the following round. There is no saving throw against this effect, and *regeneration* will not restore the lost appendages. Only a figure with strength greater than that of Pyremius can force him to remove the bracers, and then usually only if that figure bests him in personal combat.

Pyremius bears a sword named *The Red*

*Light of Hades* that can be borne by no one else. It is a +5 weapon to hit and on damage and does 3-30 points of damage per strike, not counting the god's strength bonus. A paladin who is struck by the sword must make a saving throw of 14 (no adjustment allowed for any reason) or lose all his abilities as a paladin until both a *wish* and an *atonement* are cast upon him to bring those powers back. The sword casts a red light out to a radius of 20 feet that will outline an invisible object just as a *faerie fire* spell would. The light does no damage, but it will remain around a visible or invisible object it has touched until it is removed by a *dispel magic* spell successfully cast against

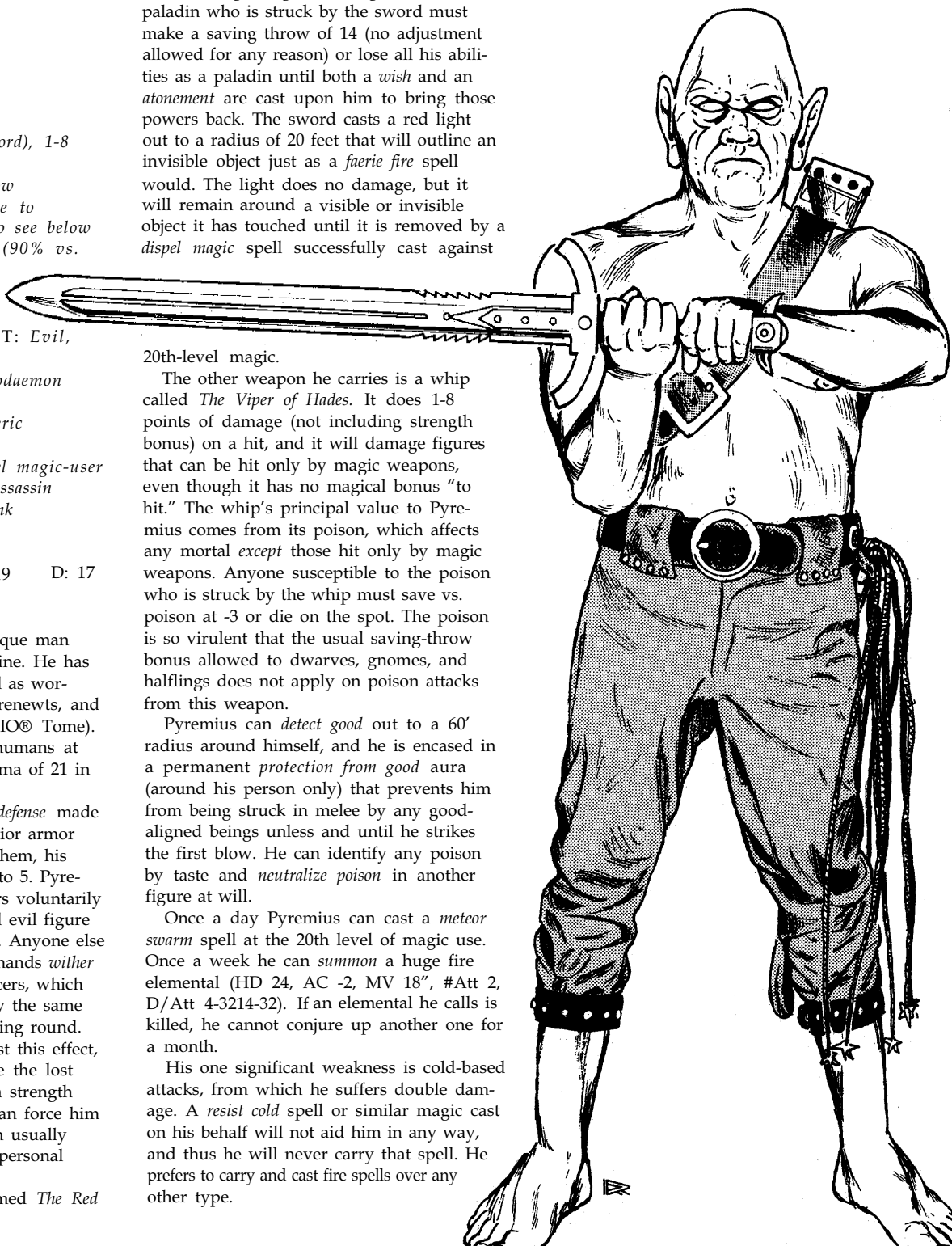
20th-level magic.

The other weapon he carries is a whip called *The Viper of Hades*. It does 1-8 points of damage (not including strength bonus) on a hit, and it will damage figures that can be hit only by magic weapons, even though it has no magical bonus "to hit." The whip's principal value to Pyremius comes from its poison, which affects any mortal *except* those hit only by magic weapons. Anyone susceptible to the poison who is struck by the whip must save vs. poison at -3 or die on the spot. The poison is so virulent that the usual saving-throw bonus allowed to dwarves, gnomes, and halflings does not apply on poison attacks from this weapon.

Pyremius can *detect good* out to a 60' radius around himself, and he is encased in a permanent *protection from good* aura (around his person only) that prevents him from being struck in melee by any good-aligned beings unless and until he strikes the first blow. He can identify any poison by taste and *neutralize poison* in another figure at will.

Once a day Pyremius can cast a *meteor swarm* spell at the 20th level of magic use. Once a week he can *summon* a huge fire elemental (HD 24, AC -2, MV 18", #Att 2, D/Att 4-3214-32). If an elemental he calls is killed, he cannot conjure up another one for a month.

His one significant weakness is cold-based attacks, from which he suffers double damage. A *resist cold* spell or similar magic cast on his behalf will not aid him in any way, and thus he will never carry that spell. He prefers to carry and cast fire spells over any other type.



Pyremius is on excellent terms with all the denizens of the gloom of Hades, and particularly so with daemons (see *Monster Manual II*). He can *summon*, with a 55% chance of success (100% in Hades), from 1-4 yagnodaemons to carry out his bidding. He can exercise this power once per turn in Hades; when on the Prime Material Plane, he can attempt this *summoning* once per round until it succeeds, but then must wait an hour before trying again.

Pyremius and Syrul (see *DRAGON*® Magazine #88) have collaborated on many endeavors on Oerth, most of them having to do with the Scarlet Brotherhood. Both deities, being part monk and part assassin, have been prayed to by the Brotherhood, and have aided the Brotherhood on many occasions — with the result that the Scarlet Brotherhood has begun to emerge as a power on Oerth. Any opponent engaged against that group might find these two deities intervening, directly or indirectly, on behalf of their worshipers. However,

they are very careful about when and how to use direct intervention, since that might involve other gods in the struggle — and almost nothing is worth risking a battle between the gods!

Clerics devoted to the service of Pyremius wear red vestments decorated with flame-shaped swatches of orange and yellow. Viewed from a distance, this garb makes the cleric seem to be on fire. Members of the clergy of Pyremius gain special abilities — not all of them beneficial — as they advance in level, but must pay for these abilities by earning an extra 5% of the experience-point total normally needed to rise from each level to the next. The abilities gained at each juncture in a cleric's career are cumulative with those gained at lower levels; for instance, a 5th-level cleric has a total saving-throw bonus of +2 against fire spells. The abilities are as follows:

Levels 1-4 — +1 on saving throws vs. fire spells; -1 on saving throws vs. cold spells.

Levels 5-8 — +1 on saving throws vs. fire

spells; -1 on saving throws vs. cold spells.

Levels 9-10 — Ability to use a *pyrotechnics* spell once per day (no material component needed for bonus spells, and they do not count against normal spell allotment).

Levels 11-15 — -1 on saving throws vs. cold spells (total penalty -3); must take 1 extra point of damage per die from cold spells (up to a maximum possible for type of die); ability to use the magic of a *fire shield* spell (hot-flame variety) once per day, as if wearing a *ring of fire resistance*.

Levels 16 and above — -1 on saving throws vs. cold spells (total penalty -4); one hit point of damage lost from any cold spell is permanent until regained by a *restoration* spell or *wish*; ability to use the magic of a *fireball* spell once per day, with damage equal to 1d6 per level of cleric.

Secret temples to Pyremius can be found in many large cities throughout the Flanaess. He has some worshipers among the barbarians, in the Amedio Jungle, and in Hepmonaland, but these are very few.

## BELTAR

Goddess of Deep Caves, Pits, and Malice

Lesser Goddess

ARMOR CLASS: -1

MOVE: 15"

HIT POINTS: 180

NO. OF ATTACKS: 2

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-12/2-12 *plus strength bonus, plus loss of 1 energy level per touch*

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Bit causes vampirism*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Immune to attacks from undead*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 50%

SIZE: M (5'4" tall)

ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic evil (neutral tendencies)*

WORSHIPERS' ALIGNMENT: *Non-lawful evil, including humanoid miners*

SYMBOL: *Great fangs about to bite*

PLANE: *Tarterus*

CLERIC/DRUID: *17th level cleric*

FIGHTER: *Nil*

M-U/ILLUSIONIST: *3rd level illusionist*

THIEF/ASSASSIN: *10th level assassin*

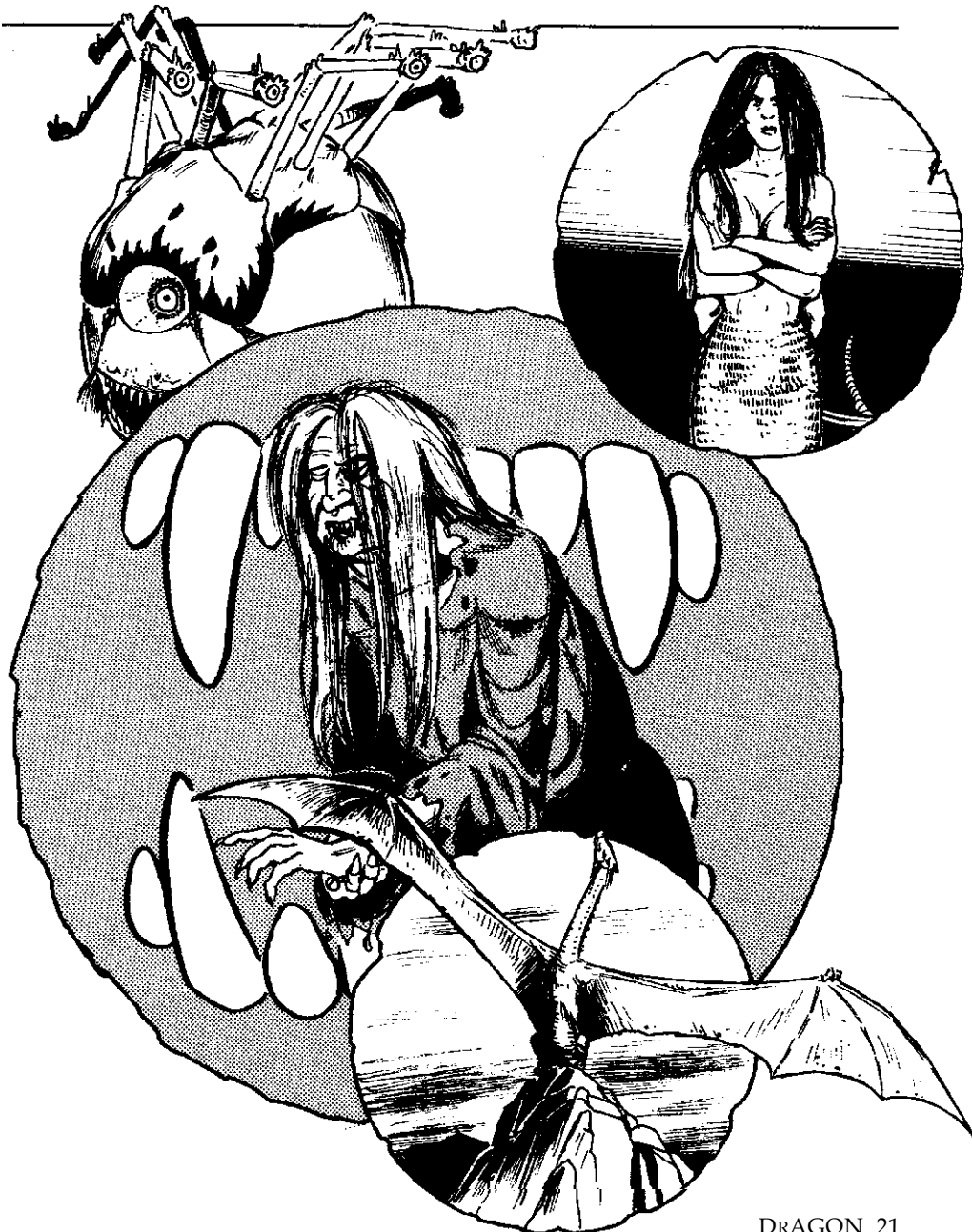
MONK/BARD: *Nil*

PSIONIC ABILITY: *VI*

Attack/Defense Modes: *Nil*

S: 18/45 (+1, +3) I: 19 W: 19 D: 17  
C: 17 Ch: 0

Beltar appears as an ugly old hag in filthy clothing in her natural state. She can *shape-change* to any human or humanoid form at will. In addition, she can take the form of an ancient red dragon (11 HD), a beholder (75 hp), and a Type V demon. She can assume any one of these latter three forms in a given day and can maintain that form for as long as 6 hours. When in the shape of the demon or the beholder, she can use all



the magical powers available to those creatures; in dragon form, she can use illusionist spells as appropriate to the creature (limit one 2nd-level and two 1st-level spells).

She uses no weapon, but can strike with both of her hands in a single round: anyone hit by her hand suffers 5-15 points of damage (including her strength bonus) and the loss of one energy (experience) level. If she attacks with surprise or has *charmed* a victim before attacking, she can bite her target and inflict vampirism. A victim is allowed a saving throw vs. poison, at -5, to escape the effects of her first bite — but no

save is possible on the second bite.

She has a vampire's *charm* power, and can maintain this power in her *shape-changed* forms. (When in beholder form, she radiates the power from her central eye only.) She can command any undead creature in her presence into service, except a lich of greater than 20th level receives a saving throw vs. spells, at -3, to avoid this. She can *summon* one Negative Material Plane undead (wight, wraith, spectre, vampire or shadow) per round, once per day, until 10 random undead have arrived.

Clerics devoted to the service of Beltar all wear black or dark grey vestments. Cere-

monies of worship to her are carried out in deep caves or in dungeons far below ground level. The greatest honor to which a high priest of Beltar aspires is the right (always granted) to continue existence as a lich when the cleric advances through the 19th level of experience; thus, there are no living clergy of Beltar of 20th level or higher.

Beltar is worshiped by chaotic evil humanoids (orcs, gnolls, bugbears, and ogres) in the Corusk Mountains, the Vast Swamp, and the Rakers. Humans worship her in the barbarian states, the Amedio Jungle, Hephmonaland, the Pomarj, and even in the Great Kingdom.

## LLERG

### God of Beasts and Strength

#### Lesser God

ARMOR CLASS: -2

MOVE: 13"

HIT POINTS: 160

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-12, plus strength bonus

SPECIAL ATTACKS: Attacks as a cave bear, giant alligator, or giant snake

SPECIAL DEFENSES: Immune to animal venom and attacks from any normal animal

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 40%

SIZE: M (5'4" tall)

ALIGNMENT: Chaotic neutral

WORSHIPERS' ALIGNMENT: Barbarians, berserkers, chaotic neutrals, some druids

SYMBOL: The head of a bear, alligator, or giant snake

PLANE: Limbo

CLERIC/DRUID: 9th level druid

FIGHTER: 17th level ranger

M-U/ILLUSIONIST: 3rd level magic-user

THIEF/ASSASSIN: 5th level thief

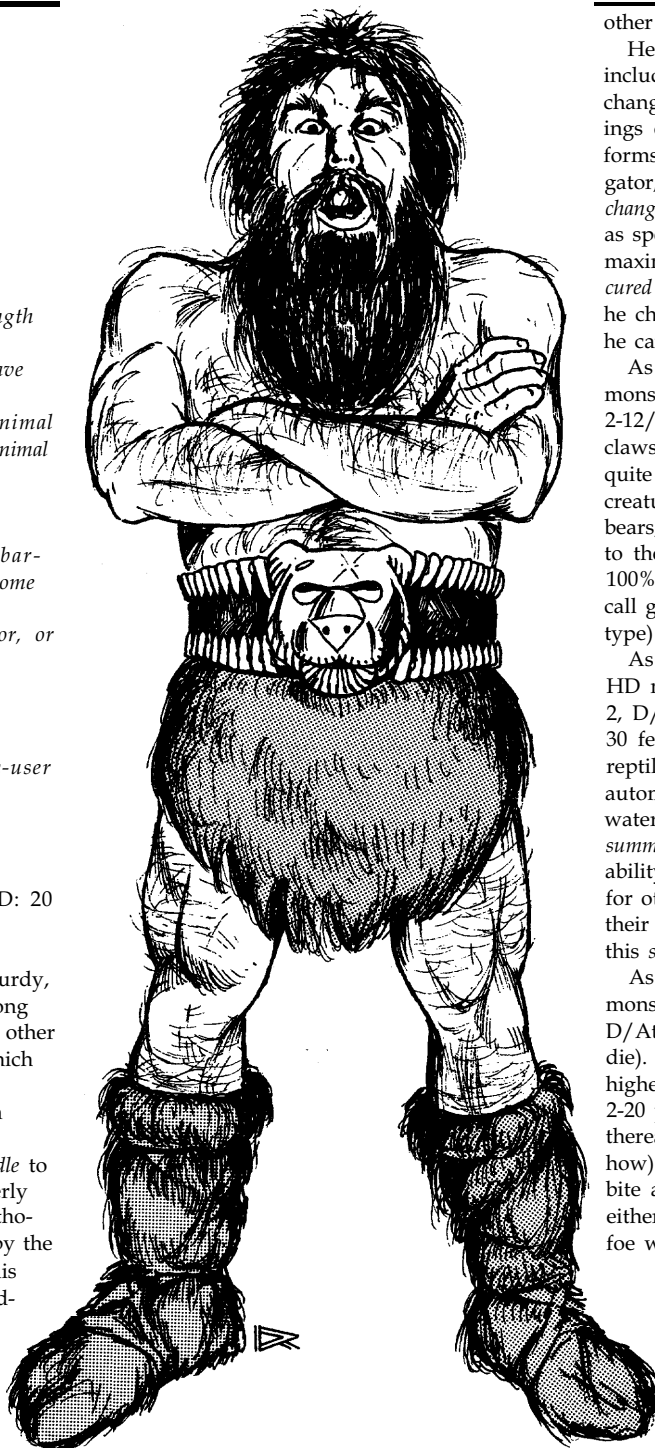
MONK/BARD: 9th level bard

PSIONIC ABILITY: VI

Attack/Defense Modes: Nil

S: 19 (+3, +7) I: 17 W: 17 D: 20  
C: 18 Ch: 13

Llerrg's natural appearance is as a sturdy, well-built, shaggy-looking man with long hair. He prefers to wear no protection other than a *girdle of cave bear strength*, which bestows upon the wearer an effective strength of 20 and the ability to *hug* in combat for 2-20 points of damage per round. He may decide to loan the *girdle* to someone, but it will not operate properly unless he so commands it — an unauthorized wearer will be hugged to death by the *girdle* as soon as it is fastened on. In his human form, Llerrg fights with a broadsword that is +2 "to hit" and does 2-12 points of damage (3-18 vs. size L opponents) plus his strength bonus. Whenever possible, though, Llerrg prefers to fight in one of his



other forms.

He can *shapechange* into any carnivore, including dinosaurs (although he will not change into a dinosaur unless his surroundings contain other dinosaurs). His favorite forms are those of a cave bear, a giant alligator, and a giant snake. In any *shape-changed* form, he cannot cast spells (except as specified below) but has his standard maximum number of hit points. He is *cured* of 3-30 points of damage every time he changes from one form to another, and he can change as often as desired.

As a cave bear, Llerrg attacks as a 9 HD monster with MV 15", AC -2, #Att 3, D/At 2-12/2-12/3-18 plus hug for 2-20 if both claws hit. The bear's body is 15 feet tall, a quite imposing figure to all other bearlike creatures; when he is in this form, all other bears, including werebears, will obey Llerrg to the death. He can *summon* bears with 100% accuracy once per hour; when the call goes out, from 2-5 bears (all of the same type) will arrive in 1-10 rounds thereafter.

As a giant alligator, Llerrg attacks as a 9 HD monster with MV 9"/20", AC -2, #Att 2, D/Att 4-24/3-30. The alligator's body is 30 feet long. Llerrg can command other reptiles who swim to aid him, and can automatically *summon* any creatures in the water around him to a radius of 1 mile. All *summoned* creatures with any combat ability, or those which Llerrg desires to use for other purposes, will head toward him at their normal movement rates. Llerrg can use this *summons* power up to twice per day.

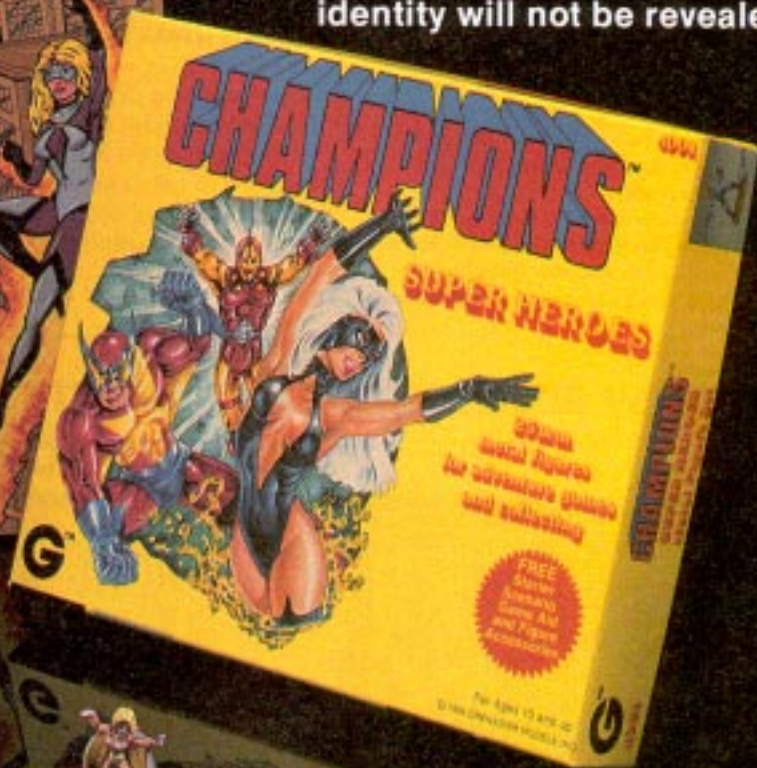
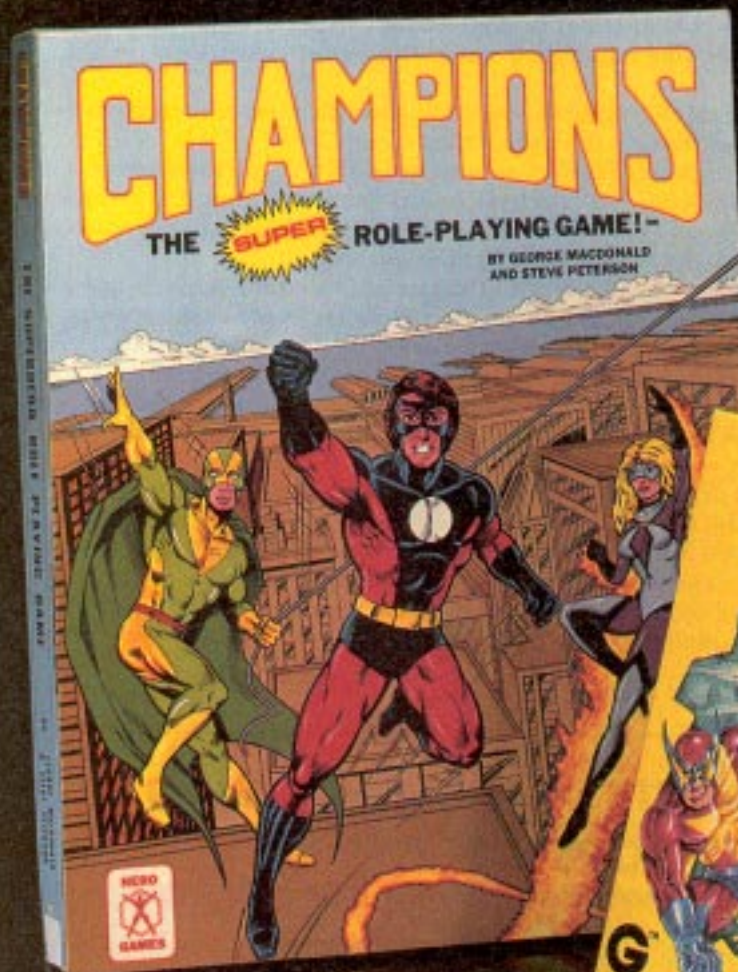
As a giant snake, Llerrg attacks as a 9 HD monster with MV 15"/18", AC -2, #Att 1, D/Att bite for 3-24 plus poison (save or die). On any natural roll "to hit" of 18 or higher, Llerrg can constrict an opponent for 2-20 points of additional damage per round thereafter until the victim dies or (somehow) escapes. He can also attempt further bite attacks while constricting an opponent, either against the one being held or another foe within reach. The snake's body is 30 feet long. In this form, Llerrg can use the magic of a *sticks to snakes* spell at the 12th level of effectiveness; all the snakes he creates in this way will be poisonous snakes with maximum hit points.

If Llerrg *shapechanges* into another form



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or moves farther than 100 feet away from the snakes, they will turn back into sticks.

Clerics and druids devoted to the service of Llerg adorn themselves in bear skins, alligator hides, and snake skins when conducting worship ceremonies. Every member of the clergy of Llerg, upon amassing enough experience points to qualify for 5th level, must seek out and defeat a bear in combat to the death (using a weapon of his choice). The penalty to fulfill this responsibility, or for running away from the fight, is the same for losing the battle — death.

A few druids worship Llerg, but these are druids who have little or no concern for plants and who will rarely, if ever, pray for spells involving plants or wood. These are druids who are concerned about the protection of carnivorous animals above all else — not protection from fair combat, but from slaughter for sport or for their hides.

No animal, even a conjured or summoned one, will attack a cleric or druid in the service of Llerg. This protection is personal, and does not extend to other members of the party. If the cleric or druid moves to initiate combat with such an animal, or purposely hunts the creature, then the protection is instantly cancelled with respect to that creature.

Llerg is a popular object of worship in the barbarian states, second only to Kord. He is also worshiped in the Amedio Jungle and in Hepmonaland, and in isolated forests where cavemen reside.

## Clerics must pay for skills

Some of the Suel deities described in issues #87 and #88 require experience-point payments from their clerics in return for the special abilities those clerics receive. The following information was inadvertently omitted from the published text:

Clerics of Kord (#87) must earn an additional 5% in experience points to rise from one level to the next throughout their careers.

Clerics of Phaulkon (#87) must earn an extra 5% in experience points during the 5th level, 8th level, and 11th level, and at every level from 16th on up.

Clerics of Wee Jas (#88) must earn an extra 10% in experience points to rise from one level to the next throughout their careers.

As pointed out in the first article of this series (issue #86), a simple and equitable way for the DM to collect these "payments" is to deduct the appropriate percentage of experience points from earned experience before actually awarding experience at the end of an adventure. For instance, a cleric of Kord who earns 1,000 experience points for his performance during an adventure would actually receive an award of 950 points, after the 5% payment is deducted.

### One *heal* to a demigod

A mistake also cropped up in the list of Standard Divine Abilities printed with the first two installments of this series (issues #86 and #87). Demigods are entitled to only one *heal* spell per day; that entry in the list should have read "*Heal* (1)" instead of being used without a number, which implied that the spell was usable by demigods as often as desired.

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# The many types of magic

## Whys and hows of the spell-category system

by Charles Olsen

When a magic-user casts a *detect magic* spell, there is a 10% chance per level of the spell caster that he will also learn the type of magic involved (alteration, abjuration, etc.). In the case of magic spells, this is a simple, if troublesome, matter to deal with. A door that has been *wizard locked*, for example, will be seen as being affected by alteration magic, and a person who has been *charmed* is under the influence of an enchantment/charm type of spell. These things can be determined by looking up the appropriate spell description in the Players Handbook.

It isn't quite as easy as that when *detect magic* is cast on a magic item. What response would be received if the spell was used on a *rod of cancellation*? A *crystal ball*? *Drums of panic*? The descriptions of these and other items do not mention the types of magic involved. To give players all of the information to which they are entitled, it is necessary to understand the rationale behind the system of classification.

Among the magic-user spells listed in the AD&D® Players Handbook, there are nine types of magic: abjuration, alteration, conjuration/summoning, divination, enchantment/charm, evocation, illusion/phantasm, necromantic, and possession. Cleric spells include all of these except possession, and add one more: invocation.

A study of the spell explanations establishes a logical pattern within this system of classification, but some of the listings are not consistent with the pattern. Also, some spells are difficult to classify because their manner of functioning does not clearly fit any of the defined magic types. This article will first define the pattern, then discuss the inconsistencies and ambiguities, and finally will address the matter of magic items.

According to *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*, "abjuration" is a rejection or denial. In AD&D game terms, a spell is of the abjuration variety if it eliminates or prevents something. *Protection from evil*, for example, prevents evil creatures from touching those who are protected by the spell. *Remove curse* will eliminate a curse, *cure blindness* and *cure disease* will eliminate the conditions of blindness and disease, *globe of invulnerability* prevents spells from penetrating, and *protection from normal missiles* bestows complete protection from nonmagical missiles.

Note that the various cleric spells that *cure wounds* (light, serious, or critical) are not abjuration, for these spells do not eliminate injuries. Instead, they heal a certain

(random) number of hit points. This healing might be enough to restore the creature to full health, but this is not assured. And though the magic-user *shield* spell functions in a manner similar to *protection from normal missiles*, the *shield* spell is not abjuration because it does not provide complete protection — it merely gives the recipient a better armor class against certain forms of attack.

Divination is any sort of magic that provides information. *Detect* anything (charm, evil, invisibility, lie, magic, snares & pits), *find the path*, *find traps*, *identify*, *know alignment*, *legend lore*, *locate object*, and *predict weather* are examples of divination spells. This is a rather straightforward classification.

Illusion/phantasm spells are those that make things appear other than they truly are. *Audible glamer* and *phantasmal force* are obvious examples of illusion magic. *Invisibility* gives something the appearance of nothing. *Hallucinatory forest* or *terrain*, *Leomund's trap*, and *ventriloquism* are other examples of illusion/phantasm spells.

Outside of the AD&D game, necromancy usually refers to divination with the aid of dead spirits. Within the game, any spell that deals with dead things is considered necromantic. *Animate dead*, *raise dead*, *reincarnation*, *resurrection*, and *speak with dead* deal directly with dead creatures.

The necromantic aspects of other spells might be less obvious. The cleric and druid spells that *cure wounds* can be considered necromantic because they repair and restore life to dead cells and tissue, and *regeneration* functions in a similar fashion.

Spells of the enchantment/charm variety are used to dominate the will of other creatures. *Charm* spells will cause the victim to treat the spell caster like a trusted friend, *geas* will force a creature to carry out some service, and *Otto's irresistible dance* will make the victim dance involuntarily.

A while back, letters printed in "Out on a Limb" debated the manner in which the *hold* spells function. The fact that the *hold* spells are of the enchantment/charm type provides an answer, albeit one that might be a little hard to swallow. Since the type of magic is that which dominates a creature's will, perhaps the victim merely *believes* that it is impossible to move. The same reasoning might apply to spells such as *sleep* and *finger of death*. However, it might seem more reasonable to suppose that these spells belong to a different classification.

Evocation and conjuration/summoning

are similar but distinct forms of magic. Both types of sorcery call forth something of a different type.

Evocation brings forth energy; a *magic missile* is an energy projectile, *shield* is a barrier of energy, and *lightning bolt* is a flash of electrical energy.

If we choose to accept the classification of certain spells as evocation magic, that definition can give a clue as to how those spells function. Each of the *Bigby's hand* spells evidently brings forth an energy field in the shape of a hand. The cleric's *blade barrier* and the magic-user's *Tenser's floating disc* would be constructs of energy, rather than of matter. The creations of the *fireball* and *delayed blast fireball* apparently are purely magical fire, since there is no physical substance to burn — evocation does not create matter.

Strictly speaking, conjuration and summoning should be considered two different types of magic. Both types call forth matter, but each does so in a different fashion. The druid spells *fire seeds* and *wall of thorns* create matter, and thus might be considered conjurations. Most of the other conjuration/summoning spells simply entice or compel creatures to come to the spell caster. *Cacodemon*, *conjure elemental*, *find familiar*, *invisible stalker*, and *summon insects* are examples of spells that summon creatures.

Because only one spell is classified as invocation magic, we don't have enough information to discern a pattern. This spell is *spiritual hammer*, and according to the description, "the cleric casting a *spiritual hammer* spell brings into existence a field of force which is shaped vaguely like a hammer." This sounds very much like a process of evocation, and no clear reason is evident for why this is not an evocation.

Perhaps a hint can be found later in the spell description, where it says "The material component of this spell is a normal war hammer which the cleric must hurl towards opponents whilst uttering a plea to his or her deity." Perhaps this spell is not considered an evocation because the energy is supplied directly by a deity. However, by that reasoning, any evocation spell usable by a cleric would actually be an invocation. There are only two cleric spells defined as evocations: *blade barrier* and *flame strike*. Perhaps a reasonable consistency could be achieved by redefining these as invocations.

But the power for any cleric spell comes from the cleric's deity, so if we follow that line of reasoning to its logical conclusion all cleric spells would be considered invoca-

tions. This is not necessarily an unreasonable suggestion, since both the *Players Handbook* and *Dungeon Masters Guide* make references to "cleric spells" and "magic spells" as two distinct systems of spell casting. Perhaps cleric spells (including druid spells) are a completely separate system, and thus do not belong in a classification framework that features terms such as abjuration and alteration.

However, the DMG also states that "All magic and cleric spells are similar in that the word sounds, when combined with whatever patterns are applicable, are charged with energy from the Positive or Negative Material Plane. When uttered, these sounds cause the release of this energy, which in turn triggers a set reaction. The triggering action draws power from some plane of the multiverse. Whether the spell is abjuration, conjuration, alteration, enchantment, or whatever, there is a flow of energy . . ." In this respect, the two systems of spell casting are identical.

Ultimately, the individual DM will decide which system is more appropriate to his campaign, but it seems more logical to retain the current system — where cleric spells are defined in the various categories of magic — while possibly eliminating the invocation category, and considering the *spiritual hammer* spell to be an evocation.

The category of alteration magic contains more spells than any other group, and the classification appears to be a catch-all; the

pattern seems to be that if a spell does not fall within the definition of any other category, then it is an alteration. But perhaps we can do better than that.

Start with the name: "alteration" implies that something is being altered. That isn't much help, because all spells alter *something*. To get more specific, it might be said that spells which directly alter the properties — the actual properties, rather than the appearance, as is the case with illusions — of some creature or object can be considered alteration magic. The key word here is "directly." A *fireball* spell will certainly alter the properties of creatures and objects, but it does so by evoking a magical fire. Similarly, a *lightning bolt* spell will alter properties by evoking a bolt of electricity. But neither of these spells operates directly on that which is being altered.

In contrast, *astral spell* simply alters the spell caster's location within the planes. *Continual light* alters the properties of an object to make it glow, *feather fall* alters the weight of the recipient, the *polymorph* spells alter the form of a creature, and *teleport* alters the location, to give a few examples. In each of these cases, the spell's effects operate directly on that which is to be altered.

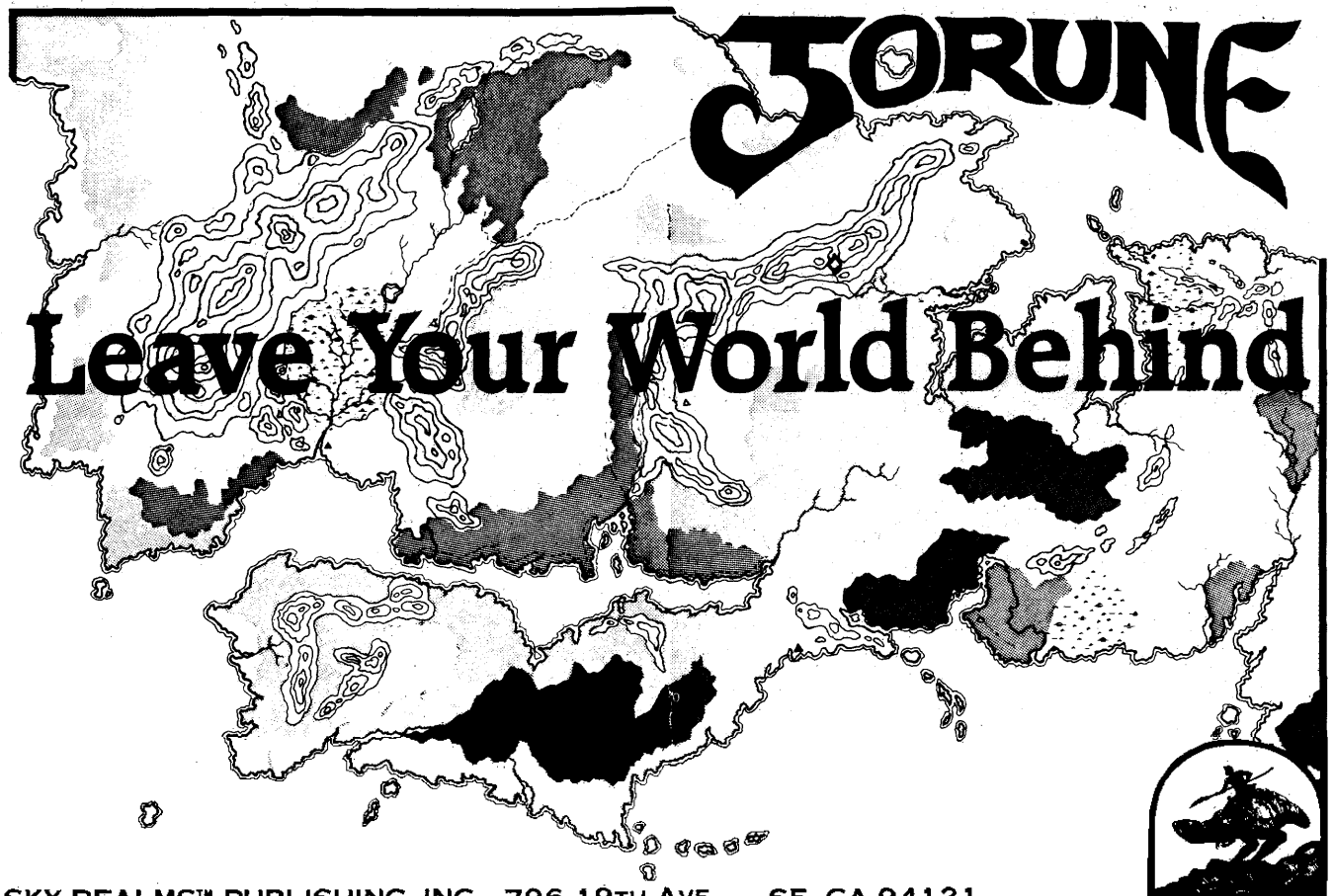
But even this does not fully explain the distinction of the alteration classification. By the reasoning given here, it can be argued that all enchantment/charm spells are alterations. After all, they directly alter the

victim's will. One might say that the enchantments dominate a creature's will by affecting its mind, and thus the effects are not direct — but this sounds like a feeble exercise in semantics. There doesn't seem to be any single rule for classifying spells as alterations, except that they do not fit into any of the other categories.


This brings us to the ambiguities and inconsistencies in the spell classifications. *Comprehend languages* is listed as an alteration, when it might seem to be divination in nature. Perhaps this spell functions by altering the spell caster's intellect, rather than merely providing the spell caster with information. Some might find this rationale difficult to accept, and they might want to place *comprehend languages* in the category of divination.

If we choose to accept the *comprehend languages* spell as an alteration, perhaps other divination spells could also be classified as alterations. *Clairvoyance* "empowers the magic-user to see in his or her mind whatever is within sight range from the spell locale chosen." Furthermore, light is a factor in determining what the spell caster will see. So, *clairvoyance* does not merely provide the caster with information, such as what is in the area that he has chosen to scan. The spell alters the magic-user's perception, allowing him to actually see another place. Could *clairvoyance* then be considered an alteration spell?

With a bit of thought, it would be possi-



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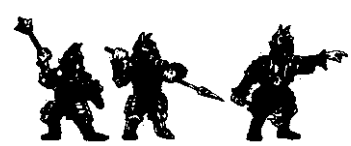
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
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ble to present arguments that could place many spells into whatever category you choose. But this sort of semantic exercise is futile for our purpose, which is simply to provide a rationale for the spell classification system. This purpose is best served by accepting only the simplest explanations for placing spells in their categories, and avoiding convoluted arguments which might justify placing spells in whatever category suits your fancy. In other words, *clairvoyance* and *comprehend languages* should be considered divinations, since they provide information to the spell caster.

The magic-user spell *fear* is listed as an illusion/phantasm spell, although its description ("causes creatures within its area of effect to turn away from the spell caster and flee in panic") seems to indicate magic of the enchantment/charm variety. Perhaps this effect is accomplished by creating an illusion of something fearful, similar to the illusionist spell *phantasmal killer*. This does not seem likely, though, since the explanation of the *phantasmal killer* spell is explicit in the description of the illusion, while the explanation of the *fear* spell does not mention any illusion.

Certain spells that are defined as necromantic do not seem to belong on that list. *Feign death* gives the appearance of being dead, while not actually having anything to do with death or dead things. This could be interpreted to indicate that the spell is an illusion, except that it does not merely change an appearance — the recipient is altered somewhat for the duration of the spell. *Slow poison* also does not deal with anything that is dead, not even to the point of preventing death (which still would not make it a necromantic spell). These spells are alterations, and the druid spell *cure disease* is an abjuration.

Possibly because the types of magic are similar, there are several conjuration/summoning spells listed as evocations, and vice versa. *Cloudkill*, *ice storm*, *stinking cloud*, *walls of ice*, *iron*, and *stone*, and *web* all bring forth matter, and thus should be considered not evocations but conjurations. Evocations that are on the conjuration/summoning list include *flame arrow*, *maze*, and *unseen servant*.

The type of magic called "possession" is an inconsistency in itself. There is only one spell in that category, the magic-user's *magic jar*. The spell description states that "it enables the magic-user to take over the mind of the victim, and thus control the creature's body." This is clearly an enchantment. The description also states that "the spell caster transfers his or her life force to a special container (a large gem or crystal)..." This indicates magic of the alteration type. It would seem that *magic jar* should be classified as "alteration, enchantment/charm," and the class called "possession" should be eliminated.

It is not clear why the spell *enchant an item* is defined as conjuration/summoning magic. No matter is brought forth, either by outright creation or by summoning any

creature. *Limited wish* and *wish* are also listed as conjuration/summoning spells, and neither of these brings forth matter, at least not directly. Defining these spells as conjuration/summoning creates still another pattern within the classification system. They seem to be alteration spells, and perhaps they belong on that list.

But consider this: Perhaps these spells are conjuring a type of power. That sounds like an evocation, but the spells listed as evocations bring forth energy that is both tangible and observable. The power brought forth by these "strange" conjurations is neither tangible nor observable, but is far more powerful. *Enchant an item* does nothing in itself, other than preparing an item to receive other spells. It causes no physical or visible change in anything, yet without this spell it is impossible to magick an item.

A *wish* spell is the most powerful magic that any mortal can cast. Depending on the exact wording of the spell, it might invoke other types of magic — alteration, evocation, necromancy, abjuration, and the like. But the *wish* spell itself, in its basic form, must first conjure the power to invoke these other types of magic.

This is, admittedly, a departure from the suggestion that only the simplest explanations for spell classification be used, but this is not a convoluted line of reasoning and might in fact be the reason that these spells were originally classified as conjurations.

All magic items that have been enchanted by magic-users (as opposed to those created by gods) will radiate more than one type of magic. These items will all show conjuration/summoning magic when scanned with a *detect magic* spell, since the conjuration spell *enchant an item* was cast as part of their creation.

The other type(s) of magic radiated will be determined by the spell that was enchanted into an item. A *ring of invisibility*, for example, would radiate the type of magic of the *invisibility* spell — that is, illusion. A *ring of feather falling* or *telekinesis* would radiate alteration magic, and a *wand of magic missiles* would show magic of the evocation type. A *rod of resurrection* is clearly necromantic, a *staff of curing* performs both necromantic and abjuration magic, and a *wand of polymorphing* radiates alteration magic.

Some items do not name a spell in the description, and the type of magic must be deduced. A *rod of cancellation* has the effect of a powerful *dispel magic* spell, and will radiate abjuration magic. *Drums of panic* cause creatures to flee in panic, clearly magic of the enchantment/charm variety, and a *folding boat* will radiate alteration magic.

Given this information, it should be easier to deal with the magic-user's *detect magic* spell. This will also be helpful when player characters or NPCs are researching a new spell, since the Dungeon Masters Guide requires that they must have a "copy of the spell in the same format as used in the Players Handbook."



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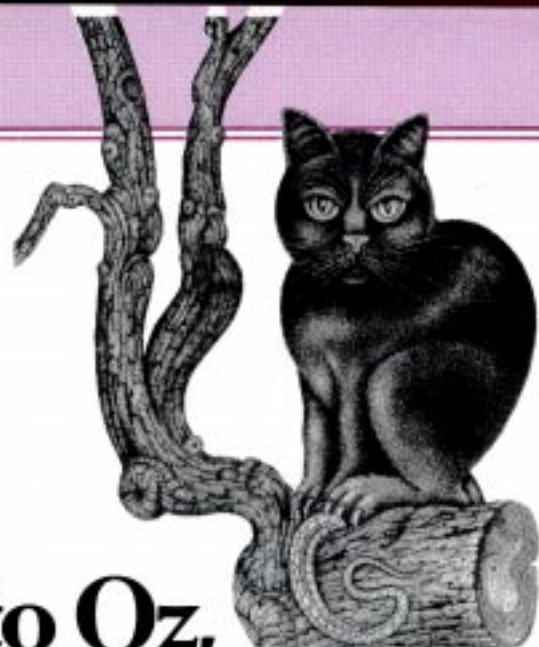
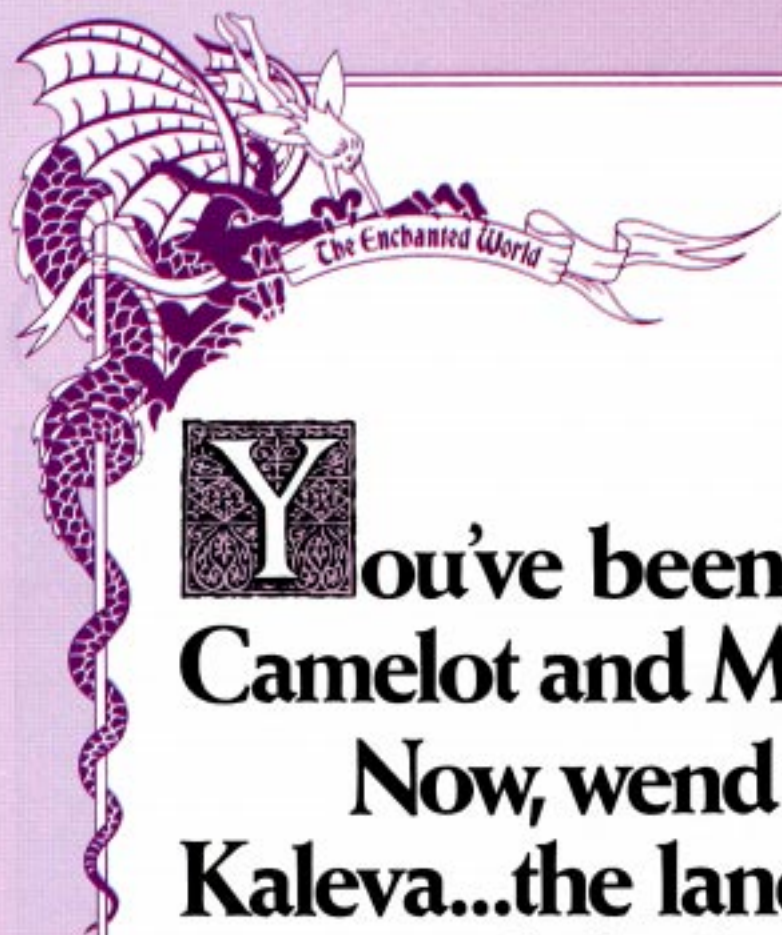
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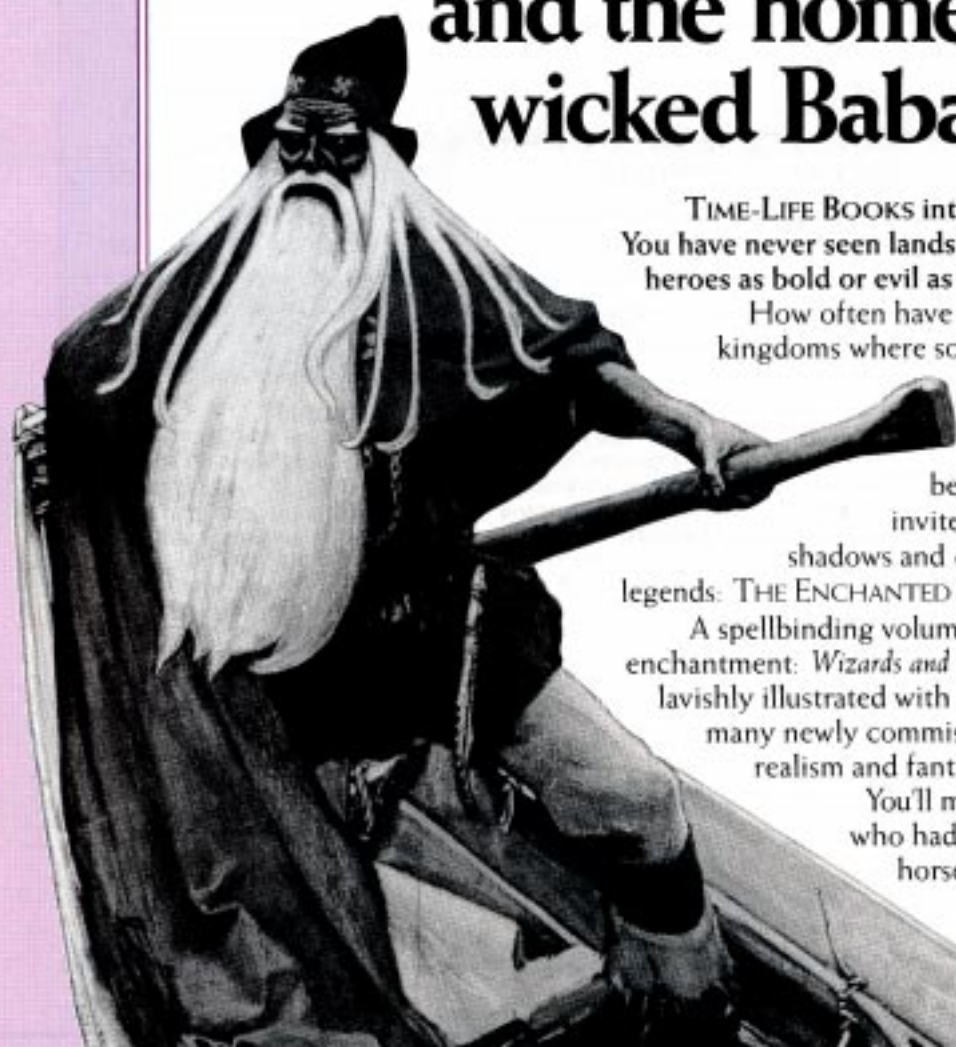
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# The Role of Books

## Words on the ways of war

by Lewis Pulsipher

### *The Art of War in the Middle*

*Ages, 378-1485*

by Charles W. C. Oman

*Various editions (see below)*

This was once regarded as the standard work about medieval warfare, and though it has not really been replaced, it is somewhat outdated. The only edition now available is a paperback volume revised by John Beeler (\$5.95, Cornell University Press; subtitled A.D. 378-1515). Many libraries have an older edition, the second, revised by Oman himself and printed often since 1923. Avoid the first edition (1898), which Oman himself admitted bears many inaccuracies, and which stops at 1375.

The book is not intended to chronicle medieval wars and battles, but through wealth of example, it approaches a chronicle. Chapters on armor, siege techniques, and castles should be especially interesting to gamers.

As previously stated, the book was once

regarded as standard if not definitive, but fifty more years of research have modified Oman's findings. Beeler embodied this in his revision, but that edition is twenty-three years old. If memory of the paperback I once owned serves me, Beeler also considerably shortened the book from its massive two-volume hardcover version. If the hardcover version can be found in the local library, and if one doesn't mind long books, Oman's own version of *Art of War* offers a wealth of detail not found in the books by Beeler and Koch reviewed below. The fantasy gamer should remember to take what he reads as less than gospel; anyway, he isn't going to be hurt by getting a few details wrong.

### *Warfare in Feudal Europe, 730-1200*

by John Beeler

*Cornell University Press, 1971, 1972*

*Paperback 272 pps.*

To many people, the terms *feudal* and *medieval* mean the same thing. What most of us think of as medieval warfare, with sometimes headstrong noble cavalymen dominating the battlefield, is actually feudal warfare. Later, when armies were largely composed of paid troops rather than feudal vassals serving their obligation to their lord, infantry in the form of archers (and later pikemen) gradually gained the dominance enjoyed by the Roman legionnaires.

In limiting his book to the feudal era, John Beeler tried to dispel some misconceptions about feudal warfare. He points out that infantry — sometimes in the person of dismounted cavalymen — often played a significant part in battle and usually provided the majority of combatants. There were as many good generals in this era as in any other, in matters of tactics, though few thought much about higher strategy. But, insofar as the generals often worked with undisciplined, independent troops unaccustomed to working together in large units, the generals could affect a battle in fewer ways than an ancient or modern general could.

Beeler's approach is very analytical, showing how feudal warriors were employed but forgoing detailed descriptions of the campaigns and battles. The discussion is organized by area, beginning with the origins of feudalism in Carolingian France, followed by the variations in Norman Italy, Norman England, Crusader Syria, southern France and Christian Spain, central and northern Italy, and finally Germany. Despite the page count, the book is not long,

thanks to large print. Moreover, it is extremely clear and well organized. One could read the last two pages of each chapter and know what happened, if not always exactly why.

Not surprisingly, this is regarded by historians as *the* book to read about this period. Fortunately for gamers, it is written to be intelligible to someone with just a brief acquaintance with the era.

### *Medieval Warfare*

by H. W. Koch

*Prentice Hall, large-format hardcover*

*Remaindered for \$14.95 at Barnes and Noble*

This may be the latest book to comprehensively deal with this subject. Unlike the others, it is profusely illustrated, approaching the coffee-table book category. Unfortunately, the illustrations are seldom enlightening, and the text is painful to read owing to inexplicable use of punctuation and an astonishingly low standard of writing. Moreover, the author appears at times to be hasty, disorganized, and insufficiently familiar with his material. I recommend that the gamer stick with Beeler and Oman.

To supplement the above works, those interested in medieval battle ought to read the chapter on the Battle of Agincourt in *The Face of Battle* by John Keegan; this gives the reader a more concrete feeling for what it was like to be a soldier on a late medieval battlefield.

### *A History of Fortification from 3000 B.C. to A.D. 1700*

by Sidney Toy

*William Heinemann Ltd., 1955*

*Hardcover 260 pps.,*

Most books about castles are disguised travelogues, with lots of photos, a few diagrams, and no analysis. Although there is a travelogue element in *A History of Fortification*, the author's architectural knowledge and decades-long thoroughness enable him to go beyond the ordinary castle books.

Although it is out of print, I've found this book in several college and public libraries over the years. It is a major revision and expansion of a pre-war book about medieval castles; consequently, the majority of the book deals with 12th- to 14th-century castles in Europe and the Levant.

While the author does describe the development of fortifications and siegecraft, the meat of the book is in the descriptions of particular fortifications. Toy includes clear,



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detailed floor plans of most of the places he discusses, as well as photographs or drawings he made when he visited the installations. The drawings span a period of thirty years, clearly identifying the book as a labor of love. I suspect that Toy was an architect by profession (though he's well known for books on military subjects), as well as a good artist and photographer. The result is the most comprehensive and most numerous set of descriptions of fortifications of which I am aware.

Any fantasy role-playing referee should be able to adopt or adapt many of these structures to his campaign. Any player whose character wants to build a stronghold can take one from the book, or rely on the extensive discussions of gradual improvements in fortifications to design his own castle. The physical development of castle-building comes through clearly, thanks in part to the thorough descriptions organized by age, and in part to the chapters discussing such subsidiary aspects as how drawbridges were raised (there were four common methods), where prisons were located, and so forth.

This is a long book, but there's no need to read every page of description. One should scan through the diagrams and photographs, reading about those which look interesting. This should be supplemented with the first page or two of each chapter, plus the development chapters.

From a fantasy gamer's point of view,

this is the best book I know of about fortifications, worth searching out through interlibrary loan if the book can't be found locally.

***The Medieval Castle: Life in a Fortress in Peace and War***  
by Philip Warner  
Taplinger, 1971  
Hardcover 262 pps.

This book emphasizes the strategic and military development of the castle from a simple wooden palisade atop an artificial mound to the stone masterpieces of the later Middle Ages. Warner also talks about life in the castle, in psychological as well as physical terms, but for the lord and soldiers only, not the peasants.

For a gamer's purposes, Warner's book is good both for its descriptions of castle development and its discussion of the psychology of the fighting man. The author shows clearly how each change in strategy or in siege tactics led to changes in castle structure, as castles changed from wood to stone, from artificial to natural locations, from defense by attrition to concentric defense concentrated on the point of attack. With respect to the strategic development of castles, Warner fills a gap in Toy's book.

The first half of the book is probably more relevant to gamers than the second, but it is all readable and interesting, technical only when necessary. Illustration is much more limited than in Toy's book, but still worth examining.

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# Halt! Who goes there?

## Introducing the sentinel: an alert new NPC

by Andy Pierce

*It was the second hour after midnight, and all was quiet at Castle Osgirand, home to the paladin of the same name. The moonlight cast twisted and misshapen shadows across the landscape in front of the castle's main gate. Inside, Osgirand and his henchmen were deep in sleep after a hard day of putting the thieves' guild back in its place. Outside the walls, two of the misshapen shadows moved. . . .*

*The man at the gate was an experienced fighter, one of the most capable warriors in Osgirand's retinue. He wasn't used in the battle against the thieves because the paladin suspected that the guild would seek revenge, and Osgirand wanted one of his best men on guard that night to thwart the thieves.*

*The guard stood silently and alertly, his hand resting on the hilt of his sheathed sword and his body barring the way through the main entrance. He had been told to be especially alert tonight, and he took his orders seriously. He scanned the terrain with his eyes and strained to hear any out-of-the-ordinary noises. But neither of his senses prepared him for what happened next.*

*Suddenly, two black-clad assassins leapt*

*out of the shadows by the wall on either side of the guard. Almost before he knew what hit him, the guard slumped to the ground, mortally wounded. The intruders disposed of the body in the murky shadows off to one side of the gate, then picked the lock and crept into the castle to find the paladin and carry out their assignment. . . .*

Although it may not make much difference to point it out, Osgirand the paladin was probably more at fault in this episode than the guard who gave his life in a futile attempt to protect his master. The guard did the best he could; the problem was that Osgirand used a fighter for a guard, when fighters are made for battle. If the assassins had attacked openly, the guard could probably have disposed of them, or at least stayed alive to sound an alarm. But since the assassins used stealth, the guard got the knife — and his boss probably did, too.

The intruders might have been detected and overcome if Osgirand had hired a sentinel — a non-player character whose job it is to defend against both open and surprise attacks. Although sentinels fight fairly well, their primary purpose is to detect approaching invaders or assailants, and to then sound an alarm and hold off the enemy until help arrives. To accomplish this, sentinels have trained themselves to be exceptionally alert.

A sentinel must have the following minimum ability scores: strength 9, intelligence 13, wisdom 14, and dexterity 12.

At the start of his career, a sentinel may be of any non-chaotic alignment. The ideal alignment for a sentinel is lawful neutral, but it's not necessary for a first-level sentinel to have that alignment. However, as a sentinel gains experience in his function, he becomes more loyal to his master or employer and more objective about those he encounters in the performance of his duties. This is reflected, in game terms, by a gradual shift to lawful neutral alignment for any sentinel who did not begin his career with that alignment.

With every three experience levels a sentinel gains after the first level, he shifts one alignment step closer to lawful neutral. This shift favors the lawful aspect over good or evil; for example, a sentinel who starts out neutral good would first shift to lawful good and then to lawful neutral. Unlike player characters, sentinels do not lose a level for undergoing this kind of alignment change; instead, they must pay a penalty in earned experience points. A sentinel's first

alignment shift will occur after he finishes rising through 4th level but before he begins progressing through 5th level, and he must forfeit 50% of all the experience points he earns while at 4th level (so that it takes twice as many points as normal to advance through 4th level). The same 50% penalty is assessed during 7th level, if a second alignment shift is necessary to bring the sentinel to lawful neutral. Every sentinel who advances to 8th level or higher will be





# SENTINEL EXPERIENCE LEVELS AND SPECIAL ABILITIES

Experience	points	Level	Hit die gained	Level title	Find secret doors	Bonus to detect invisible	Hear noise	Detect lie	Surprise	Find Traps, pits, etc.
0 —	1,750	1	d10	Observer	17%	1%	5%	25%	33%	5%
1,751 —	3,500	2	d10	Watchman	18%	2%	10%	30%	30%	7%
3,501 —	7,000	3	d10	Post Keeper	19%	3%	15%	35%	27%	9%
7,001 —	15,000	4	d10	Patroller	20%	4%	20%	40%	24%	11%
15,001 —	30,000	5	d8	Guard	22%	5%	25%	45%	21%	13%
30,001 —	65,000	6	d8	Sentry	24%	6%	30%	50%	18%	15%
65,001 —	140,000	7	d8	Guard Captain	26%	7%	35%	55%	15%	18%
140,001 —	295,000	8	d8	Guard Master	28%	8%	40%	60%	12%	21%
295,001 —	455,000	9	d6	Gate Keeper	31%	9%	45%	65%	9%	24%
455,001 —	635,000	10	d6	Gate Master	34%	10%	50%	70%	6%	27%
635,001 —	865,000	11	d6	Guard Superior	37%	11%	55%	75%	3%	30%
865,001 —	1,150,000	12	d6	Elite Guard	40%	12%	60%	81%	3%	33%
1,150,001 —	1,485,000	13	d4	Elite Guard, 13th	43%	13%	65%	87%	3%	37%
1,485,001 —	1,870,000	14	d4	Elite Guard, 14th	46%	14%	70%	93%	3%	41%
1,870,011 +		15	d4	Sentinel	50%	15%	75%	99%	3%	45%

lawful neutral, since no more than two alignment shifts will ever be necessary. Of course, a sentinel who starts out as a lawful neutral character is not subject to these penalties (and thus can rise in levels more rapidly than others of his class).

By their nature, sentinels have many abilities and attributes typical of a fighter — but the class is *not* a subclass of fighter, and it is only open to humans and half-elves (who may not be multi-classed as a sentinel and anything else). Sentinels do not roll for exceptional strength, nor do they receive the special hit-point bonus that a fighter

receives for high constitution. A sentinel with both intelligence and wisdom of 16 or higher is allowed to add a 10% bonus to earned experience.

As is evident from the accompanying table, a sentinel has a good hit-point average for a character of a given level, and members of the sentinel class continue to gain hit dice up through 15th level, the maximum level attainable. Just as the hit points of a high-level fighter reflect that character's ability to *avoid* serious damage as well as withstand it, so do the sentinel's hit points serve as a mirror of his ever-

improving abilities to notice the unusual or imperceptible and take action against a threat before it actually comes to pass. Thanks to his high intelligence and wisdom and an inner sense sharpened by years of practice, a veteran sentinel will notice a sharp intake of breath, or the position of a weapon or the stance of a would-be opponent. By picking up on signals such as these, a sentinel is able to predict how, when, and where a weapon will strike — enabling him to take relatively less damage from the attack, assuming it hits.

A sentinel attacks on the combat table for

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fighters — but it must be kept in mind at all times that sentinels are used almost exclusively for defensive purposes, and generally will not strike first unless a threat is immediately obvious. A sentinel must be able to attack quickly, to parry blows, and move swiftly to block opponents from charging past them. For these reasons, a sentinel must only use weapons that have speed factors of 6 or less, and cannot wear plate armor. A sentinel can use any type of shield and almost always carries one on duty.

### Special abilities

**Find secret doors:** This is the chance a sentinel has of finding a secret door, if one exists in his vicinity and the sentinel is actively searching for it. Sentinels are trained to notice subtle differences in wall color or texture, slight indentations or cracks or protrusions that might reveal the presence of a secret door. They can locate concealed doors much more easily; add +25% to the value given if a door is concealed but not a secret door.

**Bonus to detect invisible:** Because he is by nature more alert than other characters, a sentinel is better at detecting the presence of invisible creatures or moving objects. (This ability does not apply to astral, ethereal, or out-of-phase creatures, nor to the detection of a stationary, non-living invisible object.) A sentinel is able to notice a disturbance in the air flow, a slight noise, or a

slight emanation of heat or cold that signals the presence of something unseen. To detect a creature or object which is only hidden but not invisible (such as a thief hiding in shadows), the sentinel gets a bonus of +25% to the number given in the table.

The numbers in this column on the table represent a bonus to a character's normal chance to detect invisibility (see p. 60 of the DMG). As can be seen from the figures in the DMG, a sentinel's chance to detect invisibility goes up sharply at 9th level (or perhaps sooner, for sentinels with exceptionally high intelligence). But even at lower levels, a sentinel with very high intelligence gets an additional bonus: +2% for 15 intelligence, +4% for 16 intelligence, +7% for 17 intelligence, or +10% for 18 intelligence. This intelligence bonus is added to the chance given in the "Bonus to detect invisible" column in the sentinel table, and also to the chance given in the DMG table (if applicable). For example, a 7th-level sentinel with 16 intelligence has an 11% chance of detecting an invisible object. When that character reaches 8th level, his chance goes up to 17%. An attempt to detect invisibility is handled as per the DMG, with one roll allowed in each round during which the sentinel is within sensory range of an invisible object. Note that this ability does not have to be consciously exercised in order to work.

**Hear noise:** This is basically the same as the thief ability of the same name, except

that a sentinel does not have to be actively listening for sounds in order to detect them.

**Detect lie:** The numbers in this column represent the chance a sentinel has of instinctively knowing when he is being lied to. This detection only applies against a figure or figures who are directly conversing with the sentinel, not if the sentinel happens to overhear people talking to each other. The ability is usually only brought into play if a character is talking to a sentinel in an attempt to gain entry to the place the sentinel is guarding. As with *detect invisible* and *hear noise*, this ability does not have to be consciously performed in order to work. Note that detecting a lie does *not* enable a sentinel to know the truth.

**Surprise:** The numbers in this column represent the base chance for a sentinel to be surprised. This number steadily decreases as the sentinel rises in level, down to a minimum of 3% at 11th level and above. The base chance is modified when considering adversaries who do not have the normal (2 in 6) chance to surprise other figures. For instance, a bugbear surprises foes at a chance of 3 in 6, or 167% greater than normal — so, against a bugbear, a sentinel's chance to be surprised is increased by 17% (round fractions up). Conversely, a sentinel receives a 17% decrease to his chance to be surprised by a creature that only surprises on a 1 in 6 chance, meaning that a sentinel of 7th level or above will never be surprised by such a creature unless some extraordinary circumstance prevails.

This surprise percentage is also used to determine the chance that a sleeping sentinel will be awakened by some unusual noise; this is equal to 50% minus the surprise chance. Thus, a 1st-level sentinel will be awakened by a strange noise on a 17% chance, and an 11th-level sentinel on a 97% chance.

**Find traps, pits, and snares:** This is a combination of the thief's ability to *find traps* and the power bestowed by the druid spell *detect snares & pits*. Unlike most of the sentinel's other abilities, this *must* be consciously exercised in order to succeed. Note that a sentinel can only *find* such traps, and cannot remove, deactivate, or set them. →

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Edited by  
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*The Warlock  
of Firetop Mountain*



## Parrying

If a sentinel does not wish to attack, he can choose to try to parry one attack against him per round, plus one for every three full levels of experience the sentinel has attained — 1 at 1st level, 2 at 4th level, 3 at 7th level, 4 at 10th level, and 5 at 13th level and above. The person controlling the sentinel must announce the intent to parry before any attacks are made against the character in a round, and must also specify which blow (or blows) the sentinel will attempt to block. Parrying can only be attempted against attacks from melee (hand-held) weapons and only if the sentinel is holding a weapon or a shield.

Parrying is conducted as per the guidelines on p. 104 of the Players Handbook. The sentinel can make no return attack in the same round, and for purposes of determining whether an opponent's strike succeeds, the sentinel is treated as if he had an extra +2 bonus "to hit" for strength, in addition to the actual +1 bonus "to hit" that a sentinel with 17 or 18 strength would already have.

## Other characteristics

A sentinel can only be hired by a non-chaotic character; he will serve no one else. Once a sentinel attains 8th level and becomes (if he wasn't already) lawful neutral, he will serve his master/employer/liege with fanatical devotion. The sentinel will not accept bribes under any circumstances and

will fight to the death if no other avenue is open (for instance, if he knows no reinforcements are forthcoming and he is the last obstacle between an enemy and his master). Until the sentinel reaches 8th level, this code does not apply, even if the character was lawful neutral from the start.

A sentinel is initially proficient with only one weapon, but wields that weapon with a bonus of +1 "to hit." The character gains proficiency in one new weapon every three levels thereafter (at 4th, 7th, 10th, and 13th levels), but only attacks made with the first-chosen weapon are eligible for the hit bonus. A sentinel's non-proficiency penalty is -2 — and note again that a sentinel can only use weapons with a speed factor of 6 or lower.

A sentinel makes saving throws as a fighter and is able to use all magic items permitted to that class, except for plate armor and weapons with a speed factor of 7 or higher. No sentinel will use oil in combat, since it is time-consuming and generally unreliable. An evil sentinel might not hesitate to use a poisoned blade; however, all decisions on poison use should be made by the individual DM. A sentinel never has henchmen, and attracts no followers regardless of his charisma score.

## Apprenticeship of a sentinel

To become a sentinel, an aspiring apprentice must first serve under a sentinel of not less than 5th level for a term of 3-5 years.

During this time, the pupil (who is neither a henchman nor a follower in the literal sense) will perform menial tasks for the mentor and at the same time receive instruction in how to observe the nature of people, how to sharpen his senses of perception and observation, and how to perform the art of parrying. At the end of the apprenticeship, the mentor will turn the new sentinel (now a 1st-level Observer) over to the mentor's own employer, who will place the newcomer in a probationary job, either where the mentor works or at another allied location.

After one year of probationary service, the new sentinel will be granted a permanent placement in the employer's household, if the master is pleased with the newcomer's performance. If the master is displeased, he will either sell the sentinel's service to another employer or simply turn the newcomer loose to fend for himself.

An aspiring sentinel who successfully gets through the training and apprenticeship period will be guaranteed a place of employment in which he will be treated well and in which he will be able to perform to the best of his ability. This good treatment for services rendered is the main reason why sentinels are so loyal (and become fanatical about it as they rise in levels); in turn, this devotion helps keep sentinels in good standing with owners of estates, nobility, and other men of means who have valuable and important possessions — including themselves — to be guarded.

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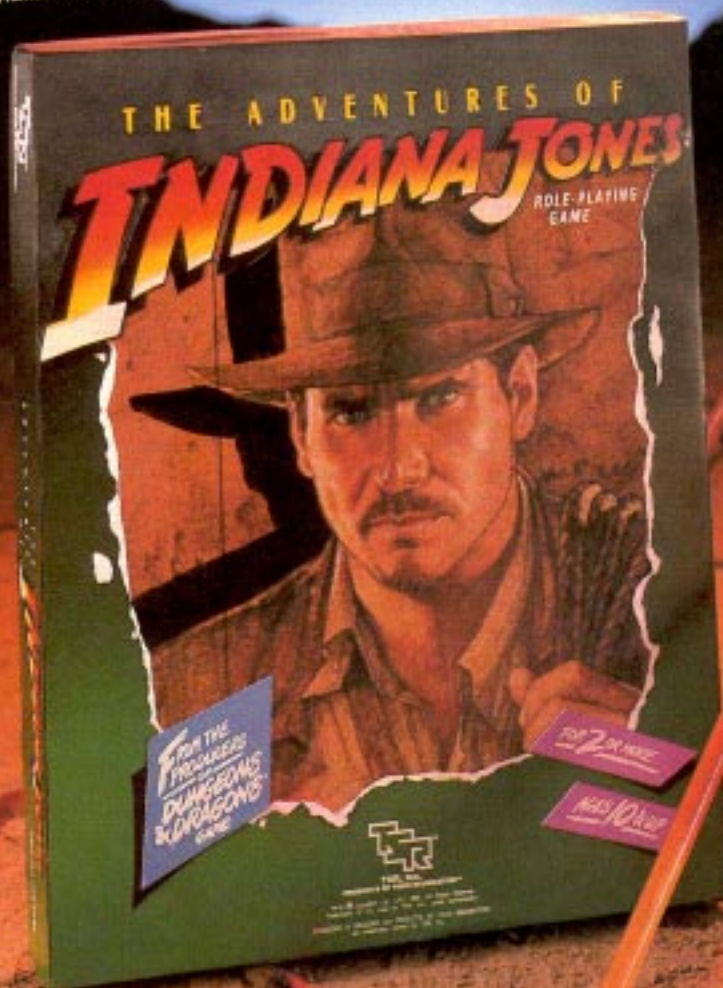
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# Beefing up the bureaus

## Suggestions for giving agents separate skills

by Mike Beeman

Has this ever happened to you? Agent 008, Code Name Scorpion, levels his Johnson semi-automatic rifle with a 6x scope at his assigned target, standing only thirty feet away. "Sneak attack?" the Administrator asks. "No," the player answers, knowing that Scorpion has a better chance to hit and can do more damage with normal "to hit" and damage rolls. Scorpion fires and scores a hit to the head — for 2 points of damage.

"But Scorpion's an *Assassin!*" the player yells. "Why can't he *assassinate* anyone?!" The administrator shrugs his shoulders and lets 008 shoot again. Scorpion misses, and the target's guards return fire. Agent 008 dies, the player flies into a rage, and the Admin sits behind his screen and winces.

That chain of events is not only possible under the current TOP SECRET® game rules, but events like it seem to occur with fatal frequency. It strikes this Administrator as odd that Assassins kill no better than Confiscators, who in turn steal no better than Investigators, who can investigate no better than Assassins. This flaw results from the amount of flexibility and freedom built into the TOP SECRET rules. With a little thought, however, players and Administrators can have their cake and eat it too. Agents in each bureau can be given specialized training that allows them to do their jobs more efficiently.

Listed below are several abilities unique to agents in their respective bureaus. All of these abilities reflect extensive and ongoing training, so the Admin may wish to require the agents to take time off to train before advancing in levels. These suggestions are unofficial, and gamers are free to incorporate any one or all of them into their campaigns as desired.

### Investigation

1. Since wringing information out of unwilling or unsuspecting persons is a vital part of an investigation, members of this bureau receive +5 points per level on both their general Knowledge trait and their specific AOK values when attempting to Fool or Con using the Contact Reaction Table. This means that a fourth-level Examiner with a Knowledge score of 86 would Fool or Con as if he had a score of 106.

2. If a specific AOK is needed to determine or notice something, an Investigator has a percentage chance equal to one-half of his general Knowledge value to notice *even if he does not possess that specific AOK*. For example, if an AOK of 80 is needed to recognize a Shakespearean quote

left by a contact, an Investigator with a general Knowledge score of 90 but who does not have that special AOK (or does not have the required minimum value in that AOK) would have a 45% chance of recognizing it anyway.

3. When attempting to open a lock, an Investigator receives +2 per level to his Deactivation value. This means that a fifth-level Interrogator with a DEAC value of 76 would open locks as if he had a score of 86.

4. Investigators receive the tertiary trait of Shadowing, which is equal to one-fourth the total of the agent's Movement Value and Deception (effective maximum of 100). This skill enables the operative to shadow, on foot or in a vehicle, enemy agents or targeted civilians. Percentile dice are rolled every 12 turns (one game minute), with a roll above the agent's Shadowing value meaning that the target has noticed the shadow and will take appropriate action. A roll of 96-00 always indicates that the shadow has been spotted; conversely, a roll of 01-05 always means that the shadowing agent has lost the trail. The Admin may attach positive or negative modifiers to the dice roll to take into account physical or environmental conditions (flat terrain vs. an area with lots of cover; inclement weather; large crowds, etc.).

### Confiscation

1. An agent in this bureau receives +2 per level on his Deactivation scores when opening a lock or desensitizing an alarm (see #3 above, under Investigation).

2. When attempting to fence stolen items, a Confiscator subtracts 5% per level when rolling on the Fencing Merchandise Table. For example, a third-level Swindler who rolls an 82 (ordinarily meaning that the open market fence reports him to the police) would subtract 15%, resulting in a roll of 67 (the fence simply refuses to buy the stolen goods).

3. Similarly, a Confiscator receives +5 per level on his Surprise value when a check is made on the Intruder Discovery Table. This means that a seventh-level Thief with a Surprise value of 120 would evade guards as if his SV were 155.

4. A Confiscator may pick pockets, shoplift, and commit other minor acts of stealthy thievery at a percentage chance equal to the agent's Deception value. Thus, a Pilferer with a Deception value of 76 has a 76% chance to pick someone's pocket. But there is *always* a 5% chance of failure (dice roll of 96-00). The Admin may wish to use

the level of the victim as a factor, so that the agent's chance of success is equal to his Deception value minus 5% per level of the victim.

### Assassination

1. An Assassin kills on *any* successful Sneak Attack, unless that attack is also a successful called shot to a non-vital area, such as the target's weapon or gun hand. This applies only when the attack is made with a projectile weapon or hand-held weapon, or if it is an attack by strangulation. At the Administrator's option, a bare-handed attack by an agent trained in the martial arts may also be included. If the attack misses, then the victim sustains no damage.

2. An Assassin adds  $d10 \times 4\%$  (rather than  $d10 \times 2\%$ , as per the rules) to his Deception when wearing a personal disguise.

3. Since there is no specific AOK dealing with explosives, the Administrator may elect to have Assassins be especially proficient in the use of such devices. Add +10 per level of the Assassin who placed the charge when rolling on the Explosive Use Against Stationary Vehicles Chart. Thus, if a fourth-level Hood places a charge in a truck and the actual dice roll is 29 (vehicle will not move), 40 is added for a final result of 69 (vehicle explodes).

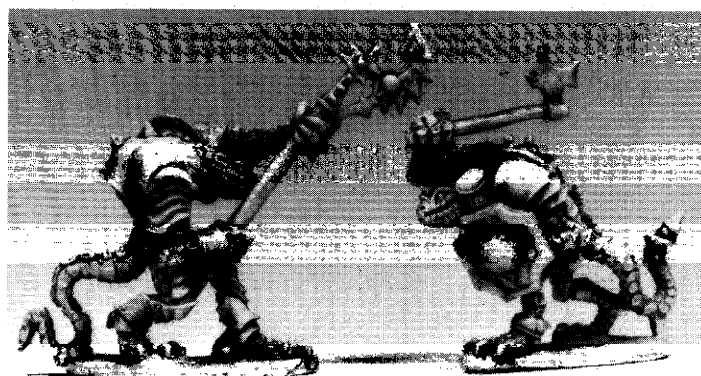
As another aspect of this special skill, Assassins only need to use three-fourths of the normally prescribed amount of explosives for any given job.

### The strong get stronger

If you are an Administrator and decide to use these suggestions in your campaign, be sure to note that agents with these skills will be very powerful indeed at high levels. A tenth-level Assassin, for example, will have at least a 40% chance to kill anyone if he can get into position for a Sneak Attack. A tenth-level Confiscator will be breezing in and out of the most heavily guarded installations with relative ease, and a tenth-level Investigator will be able to make almost anyone tell him what he needs to know.

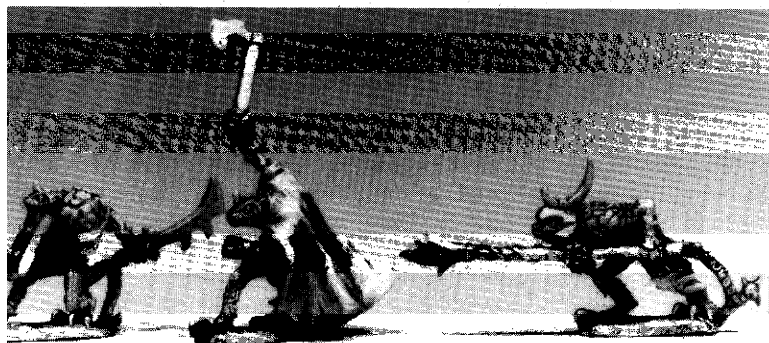
Editor's note: It is strongly recommended that if the Sneak Attack instant-kill variant is used, the Administrator should also use the "fortune point" optional rule from the TOP SECRET rule book to offset the effects of the variant on player characters. Administrators may also consider modifying the instant-kill rule to allow an attack to do increased damage instead of a kill.



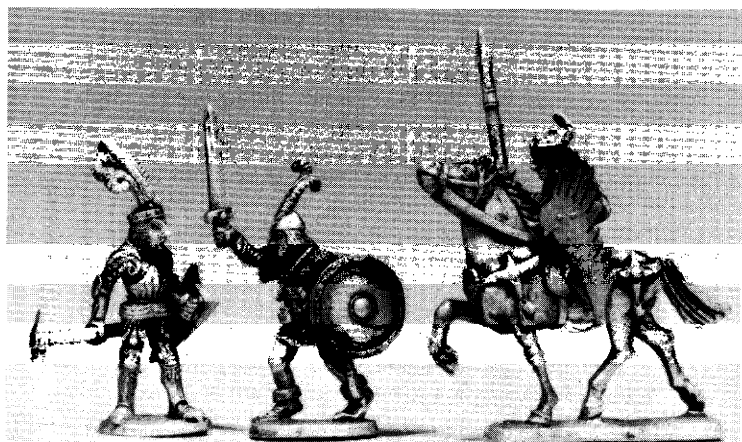


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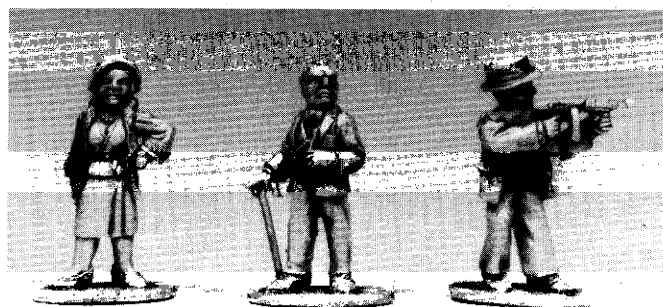
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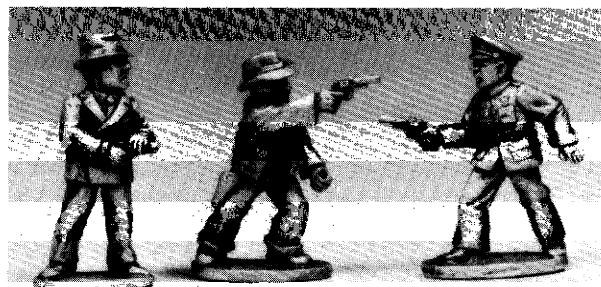
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# Learn magic by the month

## DRAGONQUEST™ rules for studying spells

by Craig Barrett

Most player characters (PCs) begin a DRAGONQUEST™ game campaign already adept in a magical college. That's the way the rules work, and since the rules also restrict PCs to membership in a single college at a time, there seems little point in knowing how a PC can enter a college *after* the campaign has begun.

However, things don't always run as smoothly as they first start out, even in role-playing games. Some players will elect to start their PCs as non-adepts (see "The warrior alternative," DRAGON® Magazine #86). Others will see their PCs stripped of magical power, either voluntarily or involuntarily, during the course of the campaign (see rules 34.5, 44.0, 46.0, etc.). Some GMs will draw from Eric Goldberg's article in Chaosium's THIEVES' WORLD™ game, which suggests allowing adepts to belong to more than one college at a time.

In all of these cases, a PC will enter a college *after* the campaign is already under way, and that brings up a major problem: In order to learn magic, a PC will have to spend six to twelve months of game time out of action, studying. This means an extended period of real time during which you, the player, have a choice of fascinating activities. You can twiddle your thumbs, count raindrops on a pane of glass, or watch your fellow players happily pursuing their own PCs' careers — you can do anything except *play*, which is what you came to do.

The purpose of this article is to provide a viable solution to that problem. Although a PC's education in magic may have to proceed in uninterrupted monthly increments (rule 34.5), nothing says those increments have to be consecutive. If a given study-month can be separated from the study-months before and after it, both you and your PC can be set free to enjoy yourselves. While your PC's colleagues are improving their skills or practicing their abilities, your PC can be studying his magic. When they're off adventuring, your character can adventure right along with them — and you can be in on the action, too.

But in order to make this procedure work, you have to have some knowledge of where a PC can go to study magic and how much magic he can learn during a given month of study.

### Monastic schools

I favor the suggestions provided in the DRAGONQUEST rules to determine the placement of monasteries, though each GM is free to organize the magical societies of

his world as he sees fit. The best way to deal with monasteries is to establish them per branch (rule 34.0) rather than per college. Having only three kinds of monasteries rather than twelve means that your world isn't going to be hamstrung by an overabundance of religious institutions. Of course, some care will have to be taken in deciding which masters and novices are inhabiting a monastery at any given time — but this has more to do with inter-college conflicts than with inter-branch differences. After all, fire mages and water mages may be incompatible in terms of the magic they *practice*, but they ought to be able to study side by side without too many problems. However, the same may not be true of pacifistic earth mages and druidic earth mages. (The answer to this is to keep pacifistic earth mages out of monasteries altogether. As individualists, they keep to themselves.)

Tuition fees are the same for all monasteries: 200 silver pennies per month actually spent in the monastery, plus 100 SPs per month that your basic magical education extends, from the first day of the first month to the last day of the last month. Payment is due at the start of each increment of monthly study, and should include arrears if you've been away from the monastery (in which case part of a month counts as a full month).

This is little enough to pay for the priceless magical education your PC is getting, and the real profit to the monastery comes in less tangible areas: the chance to spread the knowledge that the monastery exists to preserve; the services of willing novices, for assistants are always needed as each master works to further his own personal studies; the addition of new names to the list of those already loyal to the monastery. In the uncertainties of a DRAGONQUEST game world, loyal friends are priceless, and even after your "graduation," your master or your monastery's abbot may call upon you periodically for some service.

During the time of his education, your PC will be required to give strict devotion to his studies. Each monthly increment should be uninterrupted, and an interrupted month is a lost month, with both SPs and EPs forfeited. (GMs should be reluctant to allow uncontrollable outside factors to interfere with the studies of a dedicated novice. Anyone who is honestly trying to abide by the rules should be allowed to do so. Also, short missions for your PC's master or abbot are considered part of the

discipline, and shouldn't count against study time.)

The period of time your PC can spend away from the monastery between increments, whether on a mission or not, is limited to a maximum of 90 days, since successful study requires a measure of continuity. For each day by which a PC fails to meet this deadline, one week of additional study or 150 additional experience points (GM's choice) are added to his next increment's requirements. Obviously, a severely or habitually delinquent student will soon reach the point where he might as well abandon his present studies and start over.

During his time away from the monastery, however, your PC will be gathering fresh experience points. Whether he can begin his studies with insufficient EPs to complete them, as rule 87.1 allows, is up to your PC's master. But if your PC uses a magical ability during an adventure, the resulting EPs can be applied toward ranking that ability. No magical ability of the college currently being studied can be ranked higher than 3 until all basic study for that college is completed.

### Curriculum

When your PC enters a thaumaturgical, elemental, or entital monastery, part of the first month's general study involves letting his teachers determine which particular college he's best suited for. (You know ahead of time, but *he* doesn't.) How much of the college's magic your PC can learn during any given one-month increment will depend not only on which college he's studying, but also on whether or not it's his first college.

(Note: Time and experience-point costs given below are taken directly or by extrapolation from Eric Goldberg's article in Chaosium's THIEVES' WORLD game.)

If your PC is learning the general knowledge of his first magical college, it will cost him nine months and 6,500 experience points — 1,300 EPs for the first month of study, and 650 EPs for each succeeding month of study, "payable" at the start of each month. The entire course must be completed within a given three-year period, beginning on the first day of the first month.

In the first month, your PC learns rituals 32.1 and 32.2, as well as the fundamentals of the college. In the second month, he learns the two counterspells of the college and further fundamentals. Each succeeding month he'll learn a group of the college's talents, spells, and rituals, with the specific

abilities learned being determined by the GM as follows:

Divide the college's talents, spells, and rituals as evenly as possible into seven equal groups, so that all talents will be acquired before all spells, and all spells before all rituals; and so that talents, spells, and rituals are acquired in the order given in the rule book. Some flexibility should be allowed. For example, an enchanter may request to learn one ritual in each of the last four months of study, along with one of the last four spells, rather than having all four rituals grouped in the last two months of study. Any groups of abilities smaller than the others should be among the early months of study; any groups larger than the others should be among the later months. In some colleges, perhaps no abilities will be learned in the third or fourth month of study because of the small number of basic abilities in the college. There's no help for that.

If your PC is already an adept and is learning the general knowledge of an aligned college (see 34.0 and 34.1), it costs him six months and 5,000 EPs — 1,500 EPs for the first month and 700 EPs for each succeeding month of study. The entire course must be completed within a given two-year period. Your PC already knows rituals 32.1 and 32.2, so he learns the college's two counterspells in the first month of study. The curriculum of succeeding months

should be determined as for his first college, above, using a five-month base.

If your PC is learning the general knowledge of a non-aligned college (which can happen only twice, once for each non-aligned branch), it costs him 12 months and 7,500 EPs — 900 EPs for the first month and 600 EPs for each succeeding month of study. The entire course must be completed within a given four-year period. Your PC already knows rituals 32.1 and 32.2, so he learns the college's two counterspells in the first month of study. The curriculum of succeeding months should be determined as for his first college, above, using an eleven-month base.

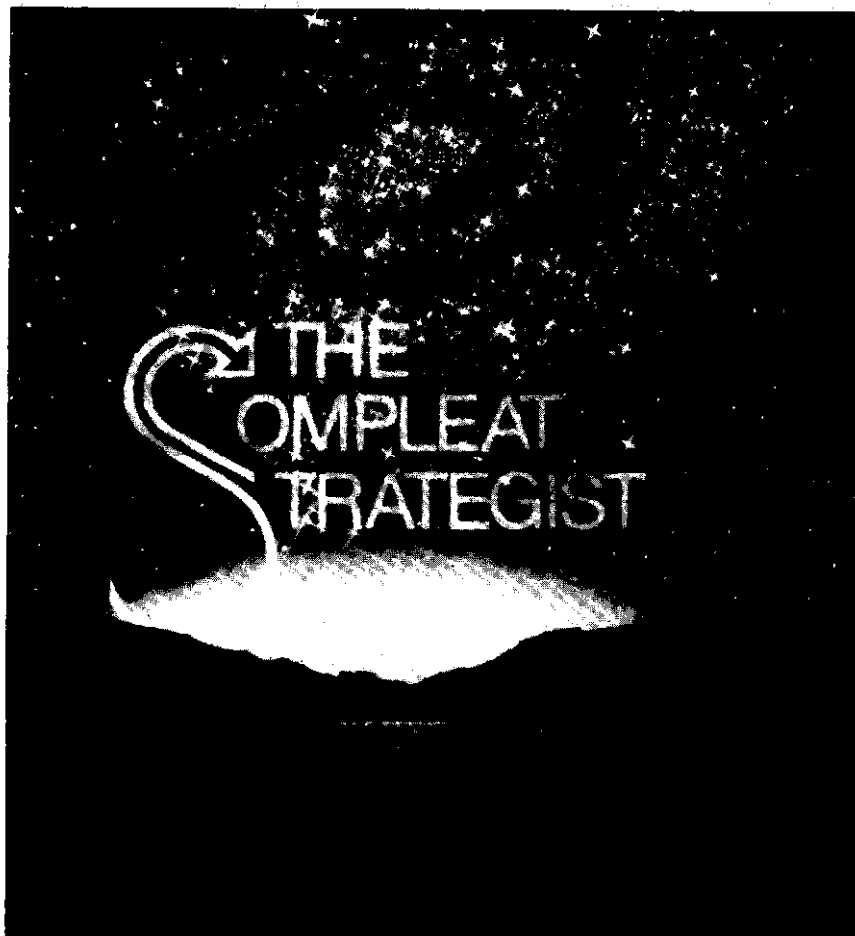
If your PC fails to meet the deadline for completing the entire course of study for a college, he is immediately reduced by one rank in any ability of that college that he's succeeded in raising above rank 0, and he can never advance past rank 2 with any magical ability of that college. For this reason, the GM should give the dedicated student every possible chance to complete his studies — acting as the abbot of the monastery, he may even give a PC some form of magical dispensation if the deadline has passed because of circumstances beyond his control. But extensions of the deadline should always be linked to a quest assigned by the abbot, to be performed immediately upon completion of the PC's studies. The only other solution to a missed deadline is

to start studying all over again, sacrificing all time, EPs, and SPs already spent.

There may be many reasons why a PC (and that character's player) would prefer longer periods of study in place of the one-month increments. With a sufficient stockpile of SPs and EPs, a character may feel that the long winter months of a Scandinavian-like environment would be an excellent time to study magic; no one's doing much of anything anyway. . . . Or perhaps your GM has things arranged so that players lend him a helping hand periodically. If you're busy doing something besides running your PC but still involved in the game, that's a wonderful time for your PC to be usefully occupied (if everyone agrees to allow this sort of "double duty"). But if your PC is unable to complete his magical education in a single continuous time span, whether for lack of time or EPs or SPs, the system of monthly increments is a useful one to adopt. Just don't forget the 90-day maximum break between increments; this pertains to all cases.

One final point: Rules 34.6 and 34.7 apply at the beginning of magical study. Your PC may be allowed to accumulate the experience points he needs during the hiatus between increments, but not the magical aptitude required. However, the ritual of spell preparation (32.1) should never be counted against the magical aptitude, since it cannot be ranked.

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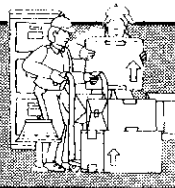
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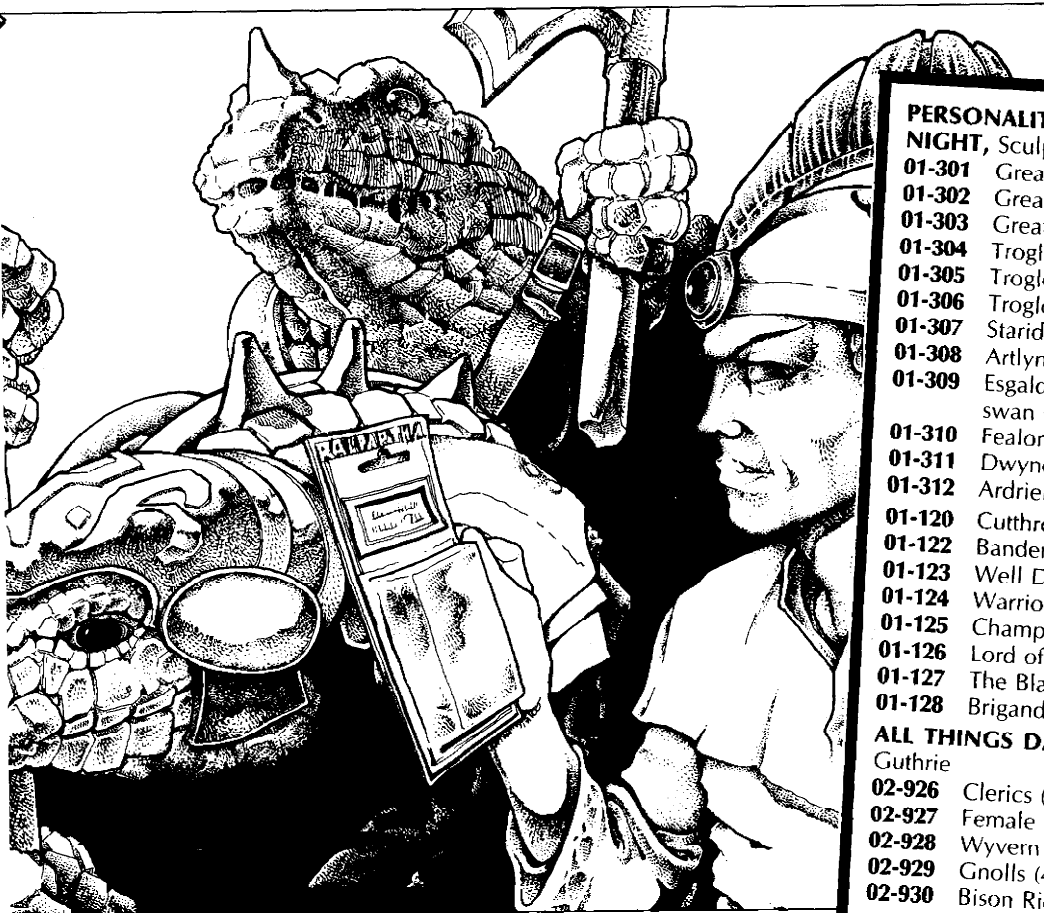
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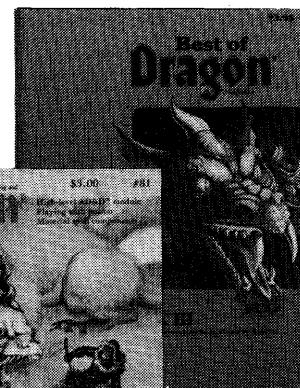
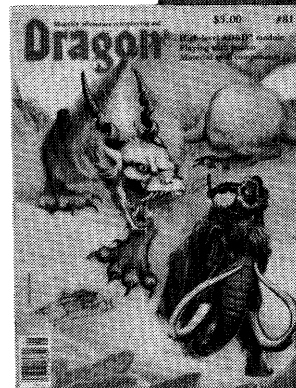
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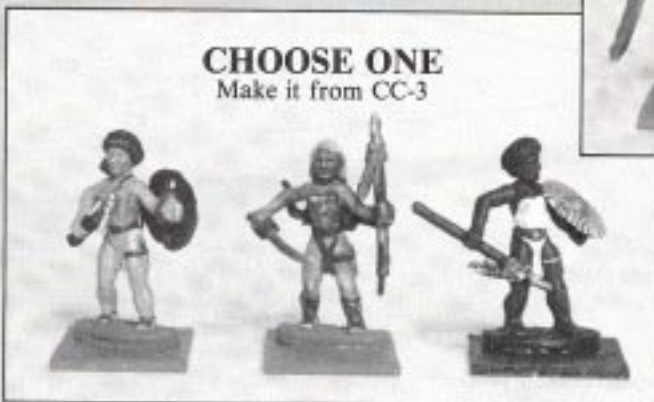
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# What is a monster worth?

## Spelling out the system for assigning x.p. values

by Roger E. Moore

As anyone who has tried can tell you, calculating the experience-point values of newly invented monsters for the AD&D® game is hard work. How much is this special attack or special defense worth? Why isn't there a table somewhere that can give you an idea of how a certain power should be valued?

When we were preparing the monsters included in this issue's Creature Catalog, some general tendencies began to appear in the Dungeon Masters Guide system for assigning x.p. values. These have been recorded below for use as guidelines.

Assigning x.p. values is not an exact science. In fact, the figures given in the DMG for creatures included in the Monster Manual are referred to in the pertinent text as "suggested values, and you may alter them to suit your campaign." For example, the system in the rule book lists magic resistance as an exceptional ability, but makes no distinction between a creature with 100% magic resistance and one with 5%. If the situation in your campaign warrants it, you may feel free to increase the x.p. value of a creature with very high magic resistance, or vice versa. And, because the system as given is not hard and fast, it is possible — indeed, likely — that two DMs will assign the same monster different x.p. values, each one perfectly justifiable. But if the basic structure of the system is adhered to by both DMs, the values they come up with should be fairly close to one another.

The system for assigning x.p. values appears in the DMG on pp. 85-86; the monster level table is on p. 174. Both are quite straightforward, as far as they go. The difficulty is in assigning x.p. values for special and exceptional abilities not described in detail, or not specifically mentioned. Just what constitutes a special or exceptional power?

Some abilities do not count at all for experience point determination under the present system. Swimming, climbing, burrowing, and flying receive no x.p. rating, since they do not directly affect a creature's combat effectiveness (flying by itself does not harm an opponent). The key word in all cases, as the DMG implies, is *combat*. If a power directly affects fighting or defense, then it adds to the monster's x.p. value.

Below are some basic definitions of special and exceptional abilities, with some examples of each. Remember, there is no precise way to calculate x.p. values, and some latitude is allowed for Dungeon Mas-



ters to develop their values for monsters in their campaigns, whether those monsters are part of the rules or newly created.

### Special abilities

Under this classification fall those powers that directly affect combat situations and enhance a monster's attack or defense capabilities. Special abilities, though they may be quite powerful, will generally not mean sudden death for opponents who face their possessor. The class of special abilities includes the powers mentioned in the DMG (some of which are detailed below) and can also include other "specials," as follows:

**Mild poison.** This category includes venoms that do not kill opponents, but do a maximum of 24 or less points of damage per use and/or have some generally non-lethal effect upon the victim. The diseased bite of the ghuuna is one good example; its victims will not die, but will become quite ill. Other limited-effect poisons that reduce an oppo-

nent's chance to hit or to dodge blows or that impair a combat-related function would also count as special abilities (such as the corkie's neurotoxin).

**Increased chance to surprise.** A millikan, which resembles a tree stump and nearly always surprises opponents, would have a special ability bonus on its x.p. value, as would any creature with a chance to surprise greater than the norm.

**Decreased chance to be surprised.** Particularly alert monsters who cannot be caught unawares very easily, like the fachen, get a special ability bonus for this.

**High intelligence.** Most monsters with intelligence of "very" (a score of 11-12) and all monsters with "high" intelligence and above (score of 13+) should receive a special ability bonus for this. However, the DM *must* attempt to role-play such monsters in the most realistic and effective ways possible. For example, a giant killer beetle will use what is obviously the most effective

attack in a given situation, will act with planning and foresight, and will not simply charge into melee against superior opponents if it can possibly help it.

*Low armor class.* Any monster with an armor class of 0 (zero) or less should get a special ability bonus. The utukku, with an AC of -2, certainly counts in this category.

*Continuous damage.* There are a number of ways in which monsters can inflict continuous damage on opponents. The killer whale can chew victims up, and the giant

if the circumstances of the campaign justify the change. For instance, in a campaign that's magic-poor, the utukku's immunity could make the monster practically invincible if no one in the attacking party has been able to acquire a +2 or better weapon. If the party manages to vanquish the monster anyway, the DM might rightly feel that it deserves more of a reward.

*Resistance or immunity to certain types of magic.* Some monsters are resistant or immune to certain magical attack forms (the cantobele, for instance, is not bothered by cold spells; the amitok takes half damage from the same kind of attack). Note that attack forms such as heat and cold are considered in this category, regardless of whether they are actually magical in nature; see the preceding section on weapon immunity. If a monster is immune or resistant to several different magical effects; it still receives only one bonus award for this category, not one for each and every type of magic it resists; thus, a duleep only gets one bonus here. This category does not include any consideration of magic resistance, which is an exceptional ability (see below).

*Resistance or immunity to poison.* More so than any other one mentioned, this special ability could be considered optional and ought to only be counted for an x.p. bonus in a campaign where such is appropriate. Slaying a poison-resistant monster might give the victor(s) a special x.p. bonus in a campaign where characters possess or have easy access to poisons or poison-producing magic. However, the intent of the AD&D game rules is clearly that poison use in a campaign should be severely limited. If poison is not available to player characters, or is very difficult to come by, then a monster's immunity to poison will have little (if any) effect on the outcome of a battle against it, and in such a case its immunity should not count as a special ability. When we computed x.p. values for the Creature Catalog monsters, this ability was not counted in the totals for the amitok, peltast, sind, or utukku. Note also that the corkie's immunity to its own toxin is not counted, since that ability is inconsequential to combat.

*Resistance or immunity to psionics.* This ability should be handled in much the same way as poison resistance (see the preceding section); in a campaign where the use of psionics by player characters is extremely rare or nonexistent, a monster's immunity is immaterial and should not be valued as a special ability. The giant horseshoe crab and the ihagnim did not receive bonus points for this ability in our x.p. calculations.

*Four or more physical attacks per round.* If a creature can make simultaneous attacks against four or more victims, or make four or more attacks against a single victim, it gets a special ability bonus here. The giant venus fly-trap and the cantobele are examples of monsters with this special ability.

*Psionic ability without potential to seriously harm most opponents.* This category could include monsters with no psionic

disciplines but with psionic attack modes and/or defense modes (like the utukku), or those able to use disciplines that would not severely harm someone (like the giant killer beetle or the psionic variety of the killer whale). If a monster has psionic disciplines that can directly cause damage to opponents, such as the molecular *shock* power of the star leviathan, then this counts as an exceptional ability (see below).

*Magical powers that will not seriously harm most opponents.* Low-level amitok shamans, who command very few harmful spells, and the bichir with its *entangle* power would warrant a special ability bonus in this category. Defensive and offensive spell-like or non-magical powers, such as those used by the explodestool (deafening), the millikan (blinding), the flailtail (stunning), and the glasspane horror (which can blind, dazzle, and become perfectly transparent), also gain special ability bonuses for those creatures under this category. Multiple powers, such as those possessed by the glasspane horror, are counted separately, not lumped together as one bonus award.

*Ability to attack with missile weapons.* A monster that can use missile weapons (as sind may use bows) or hurl missiles of some sort (like the fachan and bohun tree can do) has this as a special ability. Note that it is possible for such creatures to run out of ammunition after a certain period of time, and that all missile attacks require a roll "to hit" on the part of the attacker. The x.p. award is still given if a monster is killed after it has run out of ammunition, even if none of its missile attacks succeeded in hitting a target. However, the DM should feel free to disregard this ability for purposes of the bonus x.p. award if the monster possessing the ability is vanquished without having gotten off a shot; in such a case, it is as if the monster did not have the ability in the first place. The power to use a ranged attack spell that does not require a "to hit" roll to succeed should be counted as an exceptional ability (see below). A monster with an effectively infinite supply of missiles that could attack all day long without stopping would also get an exceptional ability award.

*Rapid regeneration.* A troll can regenerate lost hit points quickly enough for this ability to be a serious threat in combat situations; the seastar, however, cannot regenerate hit points except over a period of days, and so receives no special ability bonus for this power.

*"Special" special abilities.* The bag of devouring lure used by the ihagnim may be considered a special ability that can affect combat (putting one's hand into the bag immediately puts the character into direct combat with the monster). Though finding a bag of devouring will win no x.p.'s for the finder, the ihagnim's x.p. value includes a bonus for the ability to make it.

Any other powers of a monster that cause a reduction in the number of attacks that can be made against it, for instance by repelling metals or slowly damaging weap-



pitcher plant can use acid to slowly dissolve those trapped inside it. All attacks of this sort are similar in that repeated damage can be done to opponents without the need for the monster to make new "to hit" rolls from round to round.

*Resistance or immunity to certain weapons.* A special award for this ability goes to monsters that cannot be harmed by particular types of weapons, or that take less than normal damage from such attacks. This pertains only to physical attacks from weapons themselves, and not to "weapons" such as fire or cold, which are covered in the following category concerning magical attacks. Monsters in the Creature Catalog having this ability include the peltast (not harmed by blows from blunt weapons), the utukku (not harmed by any weapon less than +2 power), and the ihagnim (takes only half damage from blunt weapons). In some cases, Dungeon Masters should consider classifying this ability as an exceptional one



ons that strike it (without destroying the weapons) would be worthy of special ability bonuses. DMs who make up their own creatures should use these ability descriptions as a framework for defining what's "special" about a newly created monster.

### Exceptional abilities

In this group are powers that have immediate and dramatic effects upon melee combat, and can easily lead to the death of an attacking character, or the permanent reduction of a character's ability to attack or defend himself — even after the monster is vanquished. Some exceptional abilities frequently in evidence are listed below.

**Magic resistance.** Any degree of magic resistance is dangerous, since it reduces the effectiveness of all spells except those from high-level casters. Note that even the 7% resistance of the peltast equates to a 57% resistance against a 1st-level magic-user's spells.

**Poisons that kill.** Obviously, poisons that slay an opponent upon a single failed saving throw are very dangerous, and gain exceptional ability awards for the monsters that have this power. The bohun tree and dark naga are two examples.

**Swallowing whole or entrapment.** The ability to prevent a character from escaping further attacks, perhaps leading to the victim's abrupt demise, is an exceptional ability. The ihagnim can technically "swallow" victims whole, and the vurgan will do so as well.

**Major spell use.** This is the ability to use spells or spell-like effects that can cause considerable damage to opponents. The dark naga can use spells in this manner, as can the cantobele, duleep, glasspane horror, and utukku. Amitok shamans of levels 4 and 5 are included in this category.

**Major psionics use.** As with "major spell use," this category includes powers that can produce considerable damage to opponents or provide exceptional protection from attack to the psionic being. The star leviathan's *molecular shock* power is a good example of this, as is the creature's use of *telekinesis* for combat purposes. Note, however, that only one exceptional award is given for any creature type with this ability,

regardless of how many forms the ability might take.

**Drowning, suffocation, and "fast-eating" attacks.** The giant pitcher plant and giant venus fly-trap (to name a couple of examples) have the ability to contain a victim who, unless freed, will die within a limited time regardless of the number of hit points the victim still has or the amount of hit-point damage he has sustained; this warrants an exceptional ability x.p. award for such monsters. The ihagnim's one-round killing power also falls into this category.

**Permanent reduction of a victim's fighting and defensive powers, or incapacitation of a victim leading to death or removal from the campaign.** The vurgan can *paralyze* a victim it swallows, and some sind can *imprison* opponents. These powers count as exceptional ones, as would the level-draining attacks of vampires and spectres. If the opponent suffers some form of permanent loss to his ability to fight or to defend himself, then the power producing this is an exceptional one. Note that "permanent" doesn't mean the ability or characteristic cannot be brought back to its previous status, only that the effect won't wear off or subside by itself. Someone who loses a level in battle with a vampire can regain that level at a later time — but through no fault of the vampire's.

**Extreme damaging powers.** As the DMG notes, the ability to make "attacks causing maximum damage greater than 24 singly, 30 doubly, 36 trebly, or 42 in all combinations possible in 1 round" is an exceptional ability. The killer whale and the utukku have this ability.

**Other exceptional abilities.** Breath weapons (similar to the millikan's flamethrower) would be worth a bonus here, as would the calygraunt's power to control magical items, which gives it a major edge in combat.

### Rating the Creature Catalog

The following list shows how the x.p. values for all of the monsters in the Creature Catalog were determined, giving all the relevant special abilities (SA) and exceptional abilities (EA) for the monsters in question. The abilities are listed in "short form" instead of being spelled out as they

were in the text above, leading to some usages that might seem improper; for instance, the word "immunity" is used in place of the phrase "resistance or immunity," even if a certain ability is actually "only" a resistance.

Amitok — SA: less surprised, spell immunity, spell use (1st- to 3rd-level shamans only); EA: major spell use (4th- and 5th-level shamans only).

Beetle, Giant Killer — SA: 4 attacks/round, high intelligence, psionics, spell immunity.

Bichir — SA: *entangle* power; EA: magic resistance.

Bohun Tree — SA: 4+ attacks/round, missile use, spell immunity; EA: poisonous gas from fruit.

Calygraunt — SA: high intelligence; EA: magic resistance, control of magical items.

Cantobele — SA: 4+ attacks/round, high intelligence, spell immunity; EA: major spell use.

Corkie — SA: poisonous bite.

Duleep — SA: spell immunity, weapon immunity; EA: major spell use.

Explodestool — SA: deafening.

Fachan — SA: missile use, less surprised.

Flailtail — SA: stunning tail-slap.

Ghuuna — SA: diseased bite, weapon immunity, less surprised.

Glasspane Horror — SA: spell immunity, blinding, dazzling, invisibility; EA: major spell use.

Horseshoe Crab, Giant — SA: spell immunity, less surprised; EA: major spell use.

Ihagnim — SA: 4 attacks/round; low armor class, high intelligence, spell immunity, weapon immunity, *bag of holding*; EA: "fast eating," "swallowing" whole.

Millikan — SA: blinding, gains surprise easily; EA: flamethrower.

Naga, Dark — SA: high intelligence; EA: poisonous sting, major spell use.

Peltast — SA: weapon immunity, spell immunity; EA: magic resistance.

Pitcher Plant, Giant — SA: continual damage; EA: drowning.

Scallion — SA: spell immunity.

Seastar — None.

Shrike, Giant — SA: high intelligence.

Sind — SA: missile use, high intelligence, spell immunity; EA: *imprisonment* (used by some sind).

Star Leviathan — SA: high intelligence; EA: high damage, psionics use.

Utukku — SA: low armor class, high intelligence, spell immunity, psionics, weapon immunity; EA: high damage from claws, magic resistance, major spell use.

Venus Fly-Trap, Giant — SA: 4+ attacks/round, gains surprise easily; EA: drowning.


Vurgan — SA: continual damage; EA: swallow whole, paralysis.

Whale, Killer — SA: high intelligence, continual damage, gains surprise easily (under ice), psionics (for unique individuals); EA: high damage from bite.

Wind Steed — SA: high intelligence, spell immunity, *suggestion* (by nobles). m

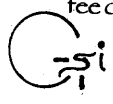
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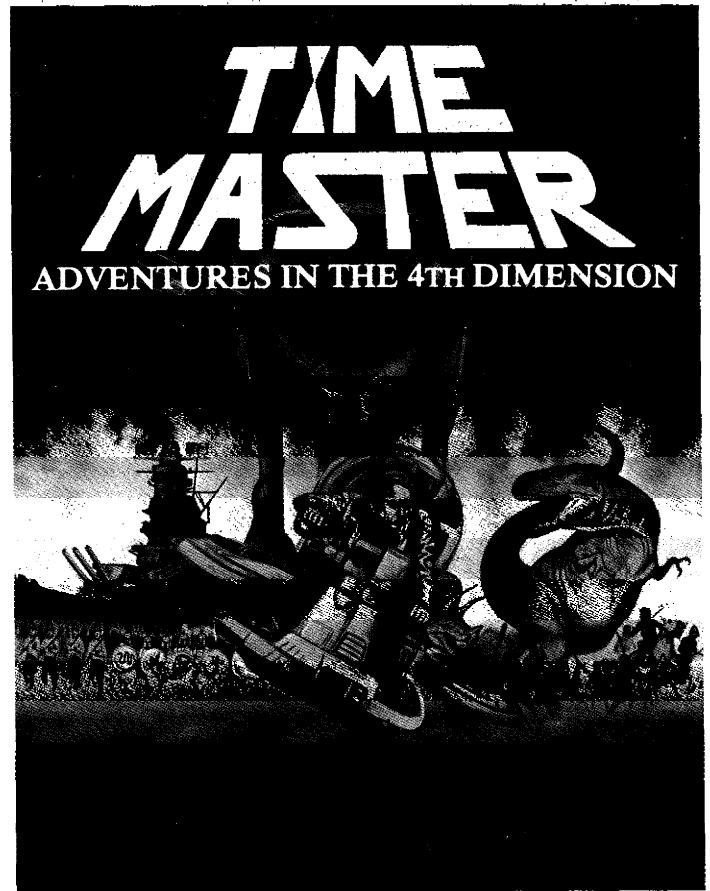
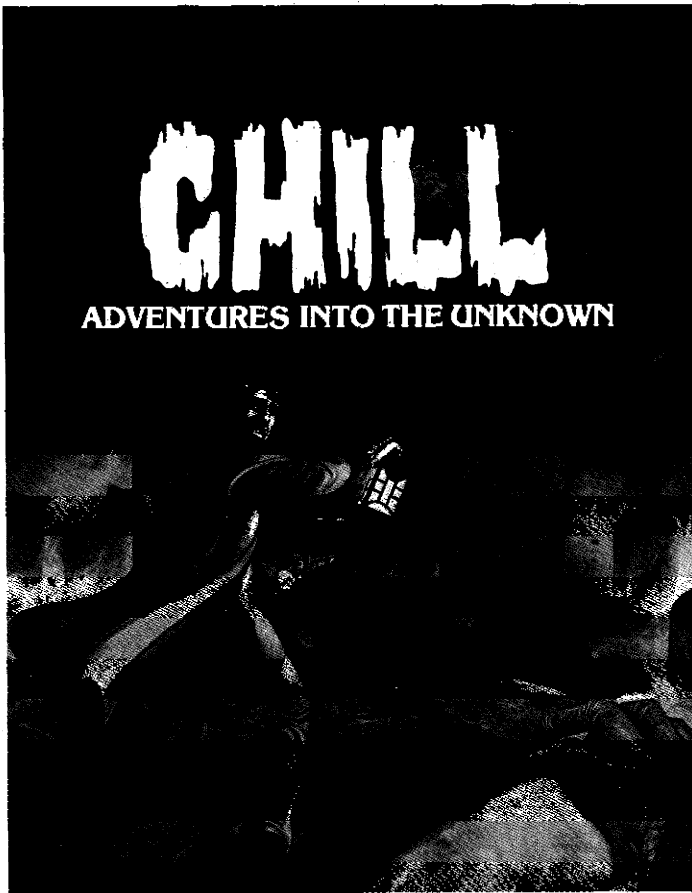
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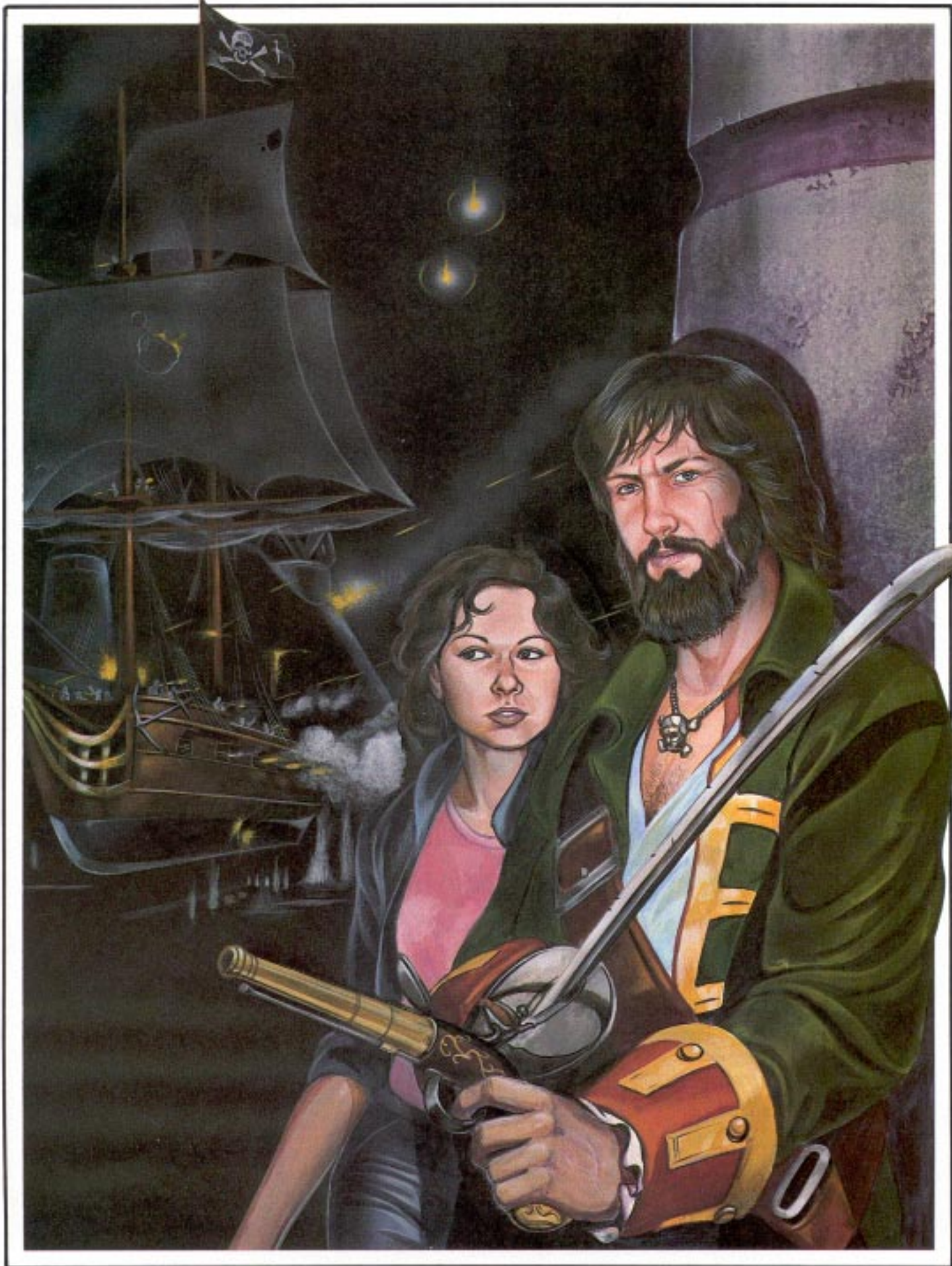
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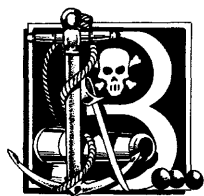
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June 19, 1735



Y MIDDAY, THE MAN-OF-WAR has closed to 500 yards, and the squall continues to erupt into volleys of wind-driven sleet. A fogbank charges across the bow every 30 seconds, strewn half-concealed reefs and shoals in its wake. The

*Redemption* bobs and lurches through the broken sea; her ragged crew and shredded rigging are a sorry match for the gale.

Vanderdecken braces against the aft mast and turns his spyglass to the *Lupus*. Fifty English sailors stand elbow to elbow on her foredeck, their blunderbusses loaded and primed.

"So," he says aloud, "the wolf has winded her prey."

His only option is surrender, but, with the cargo of an East Indiaman in the holds, a pirate's death is sure to follow.

Two sharp claps pierce the whistling wind, and a black pall drifts from the muzzles of the man-of-war's forward swivel guns. The shots fall far short of the *Redemption*, but, in his mind, Vanderdecken hears the thunder of a 12-gun broadside.

"Damn you, Vanderdecken!" yells Rodgers. "Bring her about and let us die like men!"

For several minutes, Vanderdecken studies the grisly sailors aboard the man-of-war. Finally, he snaps, "Damn us all, Rodgers! I'd sooner sail the putrid sea of Hell itself than let those curs at my treasure. If it takes until Judgment Day, I'll round this cape, so that not one of the scurvy dogs will set foot on my decks!"

The wind stops.

**S** EVEN YEARS. Elizabeth stood, propping her arms on the windowsill. Seven years since she had seen Vanderdecken, his crew, or any other human face.

She stared into the unending night and waited. She knew every gnarled foot that passed her window, every damp cobblestone in the street, every distant shanty between her prison cell and the Dunkle Zee. She had learned patience. But now her stomach churned, and she jumped whenever footsteps echoed in the dark lanes.

A day or two more, and the currents would return Vanderdecken. Seven years ago he had marooned her here, and seven years she had cursed his name, his ship, and his mates. And seven years she had struggled with the fact that the law of the sea demanded that he abandon her, that he choose the safety of his crew over the love of one stubborn, foolish woman. So, for seven years she had eaten her spite and waited for the currents of time to return Vanderdecken to the shores of the Society — of the twisted, menacing Gesellschaft. For each of those seven years, she had hoped that Vanderdecken would return, break the code of his mates, and rescue her. For each day of those seven years, she had asked herself whether she would thank him, or spurn him, when he came.

# Dunkle Zee

by Troy Denning

Illustrations by Jim Holloway



She lay back onto her stone bed and turned to the hypnocube. Its red, pulsating light calmed her anxious mind, relaxing the knot of expectation in her stomach; and she slowly ebbed into the world inside.

**E**LIZABETH SETTLED HER ARMS ONTO THE gunwale and wished for a cool breeze. Instead, she choked on the kerosene fumes that passed for air in this place.

A man's footsteps pounded along the main deck, and Elizabeth turned around. Rodgers, Vanderdecken's first mate, pulled himself up the ladder and onto the fore-deck. He was a large, untidy man, his grimy cotton shirt ripped open to the waist. He carried three loaded flintlocks in his pistol belt.

"Excuse, ma'am," he said, "don't mean to disturb your thinking, but the Cap'n, he wants you to come to supper."

She turned away from the grimy man. "I suppose he will dine on provisions stolen from my ship?"

"Of course, ma'am," Rodgers answered sarcastically.

Elizabeth responded again in a bitter tone. "You may inform Vanderdecken I will starve in Hell before accepting his invitation."

"As you'll have it, ma'am," Rodgers answered. His heels scraped the deck as he turned to leave.

Elizabeth turned abruptly. "Wait. Bring me a light."

"No lights. The Gesellschaft," Rodgers said.

"I'm going mad in this Everdark!" Elizabeth yelled.

"Learn to like it," Rodgers answered, climbing down the ladder, "ma'am."

She turned around and looked toward her own ship, in tow behind Vanderdecken's frigate. Without its green running lights, she could not have seen its sleek form slicing through the wake of the *Redemption*.

Elizabeth shifted her attention to the Dark Sea itself, watching the frigate's bow slip through the torpid mass of black mist. She could not yet accept the reality of the Tussenland — of this world between worlds — because her body's translucent pallor, the feeling of motion without movement, and the black, lonely fog disquieted her senses. Yet, the Tussenland had to be real, for she was in it.

Heels clicked in the back of her mind. She turned toward the distant noise, and the sound echoed from one side of her skull to the other. She turned again, growing frightened in this strange unplace.

The clicks stopped, and somebody called out her name, "Ghost-lady!"

**A**S ELIZABETH SLIPPED OUT OF THE trance, a dark, primeval rage rose in her chest, and the air burst out of her lungs in one angry cry.

"Ghost-lady," a hooded figure called from the cell window. It squatted on the sidewalk outside.

Elizabeth threw herself at the window, forcing her arms between the bars. If she could only catch the ugly creature, she would throttle it.

The Member fell on its haunches and rolled out of her reach. She groaned as her translucent body hit the

window sill, jarring her back into control of her temper.

"Please, Ghost-lady," the Member pleaded, "I bring message."

Elizabeth stepped back and took several deep breaths, trying to dampen the murderous fire within. All the while, she spitefully eyed the frightened creature.

The Member dragged itself to the cell window, then cautiously pushed a paper and pen between the metal bars. "Ghost-captain kill pod-mate if paper not signed."

Elizabeth snatched the note from its claw and read.

Be ready. I will see you soon at any cost.  
Sign this note and return it to the scurvy  
creature that brought it.

Vanderdecken

P.S. Your ship has been repaired and is  
seaworthy!

She studied the paper for several minutes. Most probably, Vanderdecken had not written the note, for he was not fool enough to believe such a document would reach her. It seemed more likely that the Keeper had sent it, hoping to add another shred of evidence to the files.

Yet, Vanderdecken might have sent the message, for a simple note could do no harm whether it reached her or not. Even if the Gesellschaft knew his plans, it could do little to stop the pirate captain. Its own inviolable law prohibited the murder of any intelligent creature, and nobody would ever capture Vanderdecken alive.

The thought should have reassured her. But the Gesellschaft could have prepared a new trap, could have actually discovered a way to capture Vanderdecken! The thought was ridiculous, she told herself. By his own account, the currents of time had brought him into Hafen thirty-five times in the last two hundred and fifty years. If the Gesellschaft had not yet detained him for even a few minutes, how could they capture him this time?

Still, they had captured her. They were ingenious creatures, these Members, and, in their own way, extremely dangerous.

Despite her concerns about the Gesellschaft and any traps it might have devised, Elizabeth scribbled her signature on the note. She shoved it back into the claws of the pod-mate and returned to her bed. The Member scampered away.

Elizabeth stood and paced the cell, shaking the jail door each time she stopped in front of it. Though the door had not been unlocked in seven years, she still felt compelled to try to open it.

Elizabeth dropped back onto her stone bed and stared into the hypnocube. Its soft, pulsating light relaxed her immediately, and she slipped into the memory world.



**E**LIZABETH stood at the helm. she watched as another squall blew foam and water over the deck, obscuring her sloop's green running lights. She had not removed her slickers in twenty-two hours, and it appeared the rain was turning to sleet. Both she and her crew stumbled about their tasks like zombies, their knees aching with cold and fatigue.

Pickens stuck his head out of the cabin. "Durban radioed up, Miss Chamber. He wants to know if we'll put in at Cape Town."

Elizabeth looked aft. Durban's schooner was barely visible half a mile away, but she could see that he still hoisted a fair amount of sail.

"Tell him we're not stopping until London, and then only to claim the trophy."

Pickens acknowledged by giving her the thumbs-up, then he ducked back below. Elizabeth ordered more foresail and tacked port. After a few careful minutes of maneuvering, her sloop picked up a knot and slipped further ahead of Durban's schooner.

Presently, the first mate trudged back from the bow, his face turned away from the driving sleet. "These waters are mighty rough to be carrying this much sail, ma'am." He had to yell to be heard above the wailing wind.

"Yes," Elizabeth answered, "but I still see Durban's sails behind us."

Jon's eyes flared with anger. "Would you dump the whole lot of us in broken water to win a tin trophy?"

"To Hell with you and the crew, Jon! I'll not allow Durban or anyone else to make the Cape before I do. Is that clear?"

The ship jerked and Elizabeth heard a great boom.

Then she could see neither the bow, nor the wheel in her hands, nor even the angry eyes of the mate standing at her side. The weather was calm, and the *Shanna* stood quiet. The air reeked of burnt oil, and Elizabeth choked when she breathed. Thousands of stars slowly winked into the sky, casting a faint ambient gleam upon the *Shanna*.

"Where the devil are we?" Jon asked.

Elizabeth turned the wheel over to Jon, then looked over the gunwale. The *Shanna* floated on a dark, putrid fog.

"Someplace else," she answered.

A crewman's nervous shout drifted back from the bow. "Ship's lights off the starboard bow!"

"Turn a searchlight on her!" Elizabeth ordered.

The forward light snapped on, casting its beam into the dark momentarily. When it finally found its mark, Elizabeth saw a frigate bearing down on the *Shanna*.

"My god!" gasped Jon.

The ship's sails hung off the spars as though made of gossamer, and the rigging shimmered like a spider-web wet with morning dew. Though the oak hull seemed sound enough, it had a glassy, transparent quality. Elizabeth had the uneasy feeling she that saw not a ship, but the spirit of a ship.

A Jolly Roger flew from the main mast. Several men, their skins pale and translucent, stood crowded on the foredeck. Most held a cutlass or a boarding pike, though several cradled flintlock blunderbusses in their arms instead.

The frigate opened its gun ports as it drew up broadside, then released a deafening volley. The impact jarred the *Shanna* so severely that Elizabeth dropped to the deck, and the searchlight went out. The ghost-ship stopped alongside, resembling a silent, black shape against a field of blue stars.

**W**HILE STILL ENTRANCED, ELIZABETH thought she heard a wispy voice beckoning her. "Wake, E-Beth." As she struggled to regain her bearings, she seemed . . . unattached. "E-beth, will you sign?"

As she slipped out of the trance, a wave of anger coursed through her body. Elizabeth jumped from the bed and hurled her body against the door. As she struck the cold metal, she thrust her arms through the utility window, reaching for the Keeper's throat. It stepped back quickly and Elizabeth's fingers closed on air. She jerked her arms back into the cell and threw her full weight against the door again. Pain crackled through her ribs in protest to the impact. Driven by a dark, bestial spirit, she stepped back and threw herself against the gray metal again and again.

Finally, Elizabeth exhausted her fury and dropped to her knees, panting. The Keeper stepped to the window and unrolled a scroll, then read in its croaking, wispy voice: "I, E-beth of the other land, admit I have engaged in crimes against the Gesellschaft. I have consorted with enemies of the Society and aided in their plunder of the coasts without regard for the lives of Members or the property of the Gesellschaft. My signature on this document acknowledges my sincere desire for corrective re-education, and I will submit to said re-education without reservation and of my own free will —"

Tired of the intimidation, Elizabeth stood and thrust her arms through the window, hoping to grab and quiet the Keeper. Instead, her fingers closed around the scroll. When the document was inside her cell, she ripped it to shreds.

The Keeper, who had quickly stepped back when Elizabeth had thrown herself against the cell window, remained silent for several seconds as if genuinely

disappointed. Finally, it said, "Please approach your window." Its voice was gentle, perhaps sympathetic, but it carried the hypnotic tone Elizabeth constantly tried to resist.

Elizabeth stepped to the window, seeing what she expected in the hallway: a guard wheeling a cart upon which were two trays of food. On one tray, there was a bowl of the gruel these monstrous things called food; on the other, a plate of roasted fowl and dirt apples, accompanied by a steaming side dish of leafy vegetables. From one tray, the guard took an energy wand and kept it clutched in a leafy hand.

"I won't sign," she said. "I am not of the Society, and the only crime I acknowledge is my unjust imprisonment."

The Keeper let out a wisp of air. "But you were one with Vanderdecken. I watched you bear his son. That is crime enough against the Gesellschaft." The Keeper paused. "E-beth, I cannot help you unless you admit guilt. That is our way. Before a criminal walks our streets as a free Member, she must ask for re-education of her own free will."

She did not answer. She wanted to turn away, but, as always, found herself unable to move.

The Keeper picked up the pasty gruel and tasted it. "I had not thought it possible to subsist on this cereal for seven years, E-beth. Yet, you have survived remarkably. What is your secret?" It stepped forward, moving within her reach.

She tried to lunge, but could budge only an inch. The Keeper's twiggy lips formed what may have been a grin. "Hate? Not even an Unmember thrives on such petty emotion."

"Leave me alone," she gasped through clenched teeth.

The Keeper tossed the gruel back onto the tray. "No! It has been seven years since Vanderdecken abandoned you to us, E-beth. Yet, you have not admitted your guilt and joined our ranks." It paused, then continued thoughtfully, "Have I told you? Your son leads his classes; he will be a fine Member. I wish you would see him."

"He is no longer my son," Elizabeth said coldly. "I don't wish to see him."

The Keeper shook its head slowly. "Solitude such as yours would destroy a Member within weeks, but you grow stronger. I wish to know why."

The Keeper relaxed its concentration, and Elizabeth found herself able to move. She shoved her arms through the window, this time surprising the Keeper and grabbing its neck. "For vengeance!" she snarled.

The guard slapped an energy wand across her arms, and she screamed in pain as the charge scorched her nerve endings. Elizabeth released the Keeper and collapsed onto the floor, temporarily paralyzed by the pain.

The Keeper stepped back, rubbing its throat with its hand. After a long, thoughtful pause, it said, "No, I do not believe that an emotion that yields so easily to pain could sustain you."

After several minutes, the agony burning through

Elizabeth's nervous system subsided. She crawled to her cot, holding her trembling arms in her lap. "I'll kill you for this," she hissed.

"Perhaps," the Keeper said, "but that is for destiny."

It picked up the tray with the sliced meat. Elizabeth's mouth watered as the aroma of the hot fowl drifted into her cell. "Perhaps you live on hope," the Keeper said. "The hope of eating a good meal again." It pushed the tray through the window. Elizabeth made no move to accept the meal.

"No?" The Keeper withdrew the tray. "Let me see — perhaps you hope to see Vanderdecken again?"

Elizabeth turned away from the door. "He won't come. I was nothing to him."

The Keeper gurgled what may have been a chuckle. "Touching, E-beth," it hissed, "but not effective. You do believe he loves you — you must — for in his love lies your only hope of escape." It paused, tasting the gruel, then said, "I don't know if he will come or not, so I am prepared either way. But you, E-beth, you have forgotten that our minds believe what they desire to believe, and the facts we remember are the facts we choose to remember."

"No!" Elizabeth burst, turning back to face the Keeper. "I remember the truth!"

"Do you? Why did Vanderdecken leave so quickly when we captured you?"

"He had no choice!" she gasped.

"One always has choice, E-beth." The Keeper pushed the tray of meat onto the window ledge, then shuffled down the hall without further comment.

Elizabeth stood and took the tray, puzzled by the Keeper's sudden generosity. The guard slammed the window shut and locked it as she sat down to her meal.

Though it was her first decent meal in seven years, Elizabeth did not enjoy it. She could not ignore the Keeper's words. Vanderdecken had left her, and she had passed the last seven years in a Gesellschaft prison. A few half-remembered words of love could never compare to that cold fact.

The hypnocube, too, was beginning to worry Elizabeth. Over the years, it had done something to her, altering her personality in subtle, yet frightening ways. When she first used the hypnocube, she felt uneasy after the trance ended. Since then, however, this vague feeling had grown into a black fury she could not control. But she could not survive without it, for the menacing solitude of her cell would drive her mad as surely as the hypnocube.

Soon, though, the rages wouldn't matter. She would be with Vanderdecken, or she would be insane. Either way, she would escape the Keeper's prison; that small freedom was the only thing that mattered to her.

Elizabeth turned to the hypnocube and allowed its red, pulsating light to ease her troubled mind.

ELIZABETH LEANED ON THE FOREDECK gunwale, watching the dim lights of Hafen grow brighter. After a week aboard Vanderdecken's frigate, her life had been, if not torn, certainly changed. She had fallen in love with a damned pirate.



After Vanderdecken's broadside knocked her unconscious, she awoke in his cabin. She remembered staring into a pair of ice-blue eyes and, in her daze, desperately wanting to kiss the man they belonged to. She had restrained herself — fortunately — for Vanderdecken was anything but the type of man who would have restrained himself.

And now Elizabeth was with him, afloat on what he called the Dunkle Zee — the Dark Sea. She had sworn a profane oath on the souls of her crew, and, like Vanderdecken, was damned to sail this putrid sea forever because of that oath. She had no hope of returning to her time, nobody to talk to except a bunch of early eighteenth-century pirates, and nothing to do but ride the currents of time.

The heavy boots of the pirate captain skipped up the ladder behind her.

"So, there you are. I should have known. Did you never stay at the helm of your little ship?"

The captain stood six feet tall. Nearly two hundred pounds, he carried most of that weight in his broad shoulders. Vanderdecken smiled his I-wouldn't-kick-a-stray-dog smile and rested his translucent arms on the gunwale. Elizabeth noted that they were even more pale and transparent than her own.

"Don't tell me you're angry again," he said.

"Okay, I won't," she answered sarcastically. "I wouldn't hold a grudge against any cutthroat who attempted to molest me."

Vanderdecken arched his eyebrows sadly. "You've cut me to the heart, lady," he said. "I've never cut a man's throat — unless, of course, he deserved to have it cut."

Elizabeth forced a scowl onto her face.

"Anyway, I thought you enjoyed yourself," he continued.

She turned away and said, hesitantly, "I did . . . at the time." She paused, then added harshly, "But I think you're using me, and that makes me angry. I wish I were anyplace in the universe but on this ship with you!"

Vanderdecken stepped around to face her. "You must know by now that I love you. But" — he paused and smiled his I'll-make-it-up-to-you smile — "if you want to leave, I'll arrange that, too."

"Thanks," Elizabeth retorted. "From your stories, I'm sure I'd be much safer with the Gesellschaft."

"But you must admit," Vanderdecken said, still smiling, "not as happy."

Elizabeth softened. "Perhaps not. At least you're the same species I am, even if you don't act like it."

"But I did not mean I would leave you with the Gesellschaft," Vanderdecken said intently. "Aacht! I would not do that to the Admiralty Court itself! I will return you to your city, your San Francisco."

"Very funny, Captain," Elizabeth said. "You've been stuck here for how long?"

"But you have been here only one week, Elizabeth. More importantly, though, your ship is not of the Tussenland."

"What do you mean?" Elizabeth asked skeptically.

"It is not like my ship. Perhaps it is that strange wood —"

"Fiberglass," Elizabeth interjected.

"Perhaps the fiberglass, then, protected it through the journey between times. Unlike my ship, it is not a ghost in this place. It seems strong and seaworthy — perhaps strong enough to survive another trip."

"Then I can go back?"

"We can try."

In her excitement, she grabbed Vanderdecken and kissed him hard. When she released him, he grabbed her and kissed her back even harder.

"We will be very happy, you and I, sailing the salt sea in your little ship!" he said.

Elizabeth paused to breathe, then asked, "What do you mean?"

Vanderdecken smiled and said, "Of course, I will marry you!"

"Marry me?" she gasped. "Are you crazy?"

Vanderdecken paused and studied her. "You don't love me?"

"Of course I do — no, maybe I do. I don't know! But it doesn't matter; you can't come with me!"

"But I must! My crew and I cannot return to our own time."

"There is no place for you," Elizabeth said. "You're pirates!"

"But we are men, also. We have sailed the Dunkle Zee for two hundred and fifty years, Elizabeth, so we are very lonely men, indeed. You could not leave us here!"

"I suppose not," she sighed, "but my world is very different. How will you survive?"

"We will sail!" Vanderdecken said confidently. "Besides, it will not be so terrible if we don't survive. I prefer death to the Dunkle Zee."

"Perhaps," Elizabeth answered.

"Good! My crew and I will sail your little ship into Hafen tomorrow and repair it."

"Hafen? Isn't that Gesellschaft territory?"

"Aye," he answered, "it's the very home of the cowards. But if we are to escape the Tussenland, we must repair your ship; and if we are to repair your ship, we must do it in Hafen."

"It's madness!" Elizabeth said.

"Here, everything is madness; and to survive, we must be madmen. Still, there is no choice, so I will take your ship into Hafen."

"But —"

"Do not worry. I will leave Rodgers to protect you."

"No," Elizabeth said, "I'm coming with you."

Vanderdecken smiled patronizingly. "Don't be silly, my sweet. Hafen is more dangerous than I make it sound. The harbor is so narrow and treacherous that it requires an hour to enter or leave. And the Gesellschaft will test our cunning and strength many times during our stay."

"No!" Elizabeth yelled. "I'm coming!"

"No!" Vanderdecken boomed. "I am captain. You stay!"

"The Hell I will!" she fumed. "I won't trust my

*Shanna* to the same cutthroats that murdered her crew!"

He raised his hand to strike, then gained control of himself and brought it to his side. Though a short-tempered pirate, Vanderdecken considered himself a gentleman and would not intentionally harm a lady. Still, his eyes were cold. "I apologize for my crew's unfortunate mistake." He nodded formally and turned to go.

"Wait," Elizabeth said.

Vanderdecken turned. "Yes?" His eyes remained icy.

She hesitated. "I will accompany you — the *Shanna* is my ship."

"Of course," Vanderdecken answered bitterly. "I forget myself. You may come at your own risk." He climbed down the ladder and left her to her thoughts.

A bell clanged. Elizabeth turned toward the deck. It was barren.

The bell clanged again, this time louder. She heard feet scuffling, but saw no men.

**F**INALLY, SHE SLIPPED OUT OF THE trance. A Member, out in the harbor, was clanging a bell. She turned to her tiny window and saw the feet of many Members running past, their wispy voices chattering in panic.

Then the anger overcame her. She thrust her arms between the bars of the cell window, hoping to grab some unlucky creature. Immediately, a Member tripped and her fingers clamped its leg. She pulled the terrified creature to the window. When it was close enough, she released the leg and clutched its throat.

The Member screamed, but no others stopped. Its neck cracked in her grip, and its eyes bugged out with fear and incomprehension. She squeezed harder.

Cannons rumbled out in the harbor. Vanderdecken! She released the Member and turned to the door. She had to open that door and find the pirate captain.

She pounded on the door with her fists. "Keeper!" she yelled. "Let me out of here! I know something's happening. I don't want to be trapped."

She soon heard the Keeper scurrying down the hallway. She prepared to lash out as soon as it opened the window slit. However, to her surprise, she heard the Keeper's keys jingling in the lock.

"Yes, E-beth, something is happening," the Keeper hissed as it opened the door. "You know what it is."

Elizabeth flung the door open with all of her strength, hoping to use it to pin the Keeper against the wall, and charged into the hallway. The Keeper, however, moved away too quickly; and the door slammed against the stones with a hollow clang. Elizabeth turned to attack, but, once again, it was prepared for her. The Keeper lashed out with an energy wand, drawing the shimmering blade across her ribs. She fell to the floor immediately, the sting of the wand blazing through every nerve ending in her body.

The Keeper stood over Elizabeth's motionless body, holding the wand between them. "Do not worry, E-beth. Our weapons do not steal the lives of their victims. In this respect, we are more generous than your

species." The Keeper paused, its black eyes growing icy cold. "But there are two things we cannot forgive: the murder of our Members and the robbery of our Society." The Keeper's voice assumed a wisp of fanaticism. "Vanderdecken is guilty of both. His crimes must be punished!"

The Keeper stepped away from Elizabeth, his stringy face now showing the barest hint of sympathy.

"E-beth, as we leave this hall, remember that you will have two choices; both will punish Vanderdecken. If you choose to stay, Vanderdecken will try to rescue you, but we will imprison him forever. If you flee to the ghost-captain, he will die by your hand. Both choices bring sorrow. The first will preserve Vanderdecken's life and, thus, his love for you. However, you will both languish in our prison until eternity ends. The second will end his life, but not before the love has passed from his heart. In this case, you will gain your own freedom." The Keeper paused, then added, "Decide quickly; the time is almost at hand."

The Keeper waited several minutes for her to recover, then motioned for her to walk down the hall. They had walked less than a hundred steps when a cannon ball struck the building, shaking the ancient structure so badly that they were showered with dust and rock chips. Elizabeth heard the Keeper's shuffle hesitate behind her. Turning immediately, she swung both of her fists at him. She hit only air, for the Keeper already lay sprawled on the ground. The two eyed each other for several long minutes. While Elizabeth anticipated the sting of the energy wand, the Keeper watched her expectantly as if waiting for Elizabeth to act out her part in its carefully plotted drama.

Finally, Elizabeth stomped on the arm that held the wand, then she grabbed the weapon. The Keeper still did not move, though it watched her intently. "It seems Vanderdecken has changed your plans," she snarled, raising the wand to strike.

"No." Its voice assumed its hypnotic tone. "Do not strike me. Go to the ghost-captain if you must, but be prepared to pay the cost." The Keeper's eyes pulsed red as it spoke. Elizabeth turned away immediately.

She ran through the hallway as fast as she could. To her surprise, she remembered every turn and every doorway, though it had been seven years ago that the guards dragged her through the twisting corridors. Finally, she approached the doors guarding the exit into the Chamber of Waiting.

She raised her foot and kicked them open, the energy wand ready to strike the guards she expected to see on the other side. As the doors burst open, two surprised guards turned to face her and drew their wands. She brought the shimmering blade across both their stringy bodies, and they collapsed in pain.

Members stood crowded in the chamber, apparently hiding from Vanderdecken and his crew. They immediately moved away from her, pressing together in fear of the ghost-lady. Elizabeth paused and studied the room carefully, looking for more guards. To her relief, all of the twiggy creatures were either trade- or worker-Members without weapons of any kind.

As Elizabeth walked through the crowded room, she grew aware of the dark fury raging inside. She fought to concentrate on escaping and finding Vanderdecken, but could not restrain herself from swinging the wand at any Member not quick enough to scuttle out of her path.

When she opened the doors leading into the streets, she was greeted by another chorus of cannons in the harbor. Vanderdecken's frigate, perhaps a half-mile out, sailed slowly toward Hafen, its gossamer sails and petrified hull nearly hidden under a pall of black smoke. On the shores of the harbor, several buildings lay in ruins; wisps of gray smoke rose from dozens of small, bright fires.

Elizabeth jogged down the worn stone steps into the street, glancing back at the Hall of Education. The two guards she had struck with her wand stood in the doorway and rubbed their midsections. Though their black eyes watched her every move, they made no effort to stop her escape.

Elizabeth turned down the main street leading to the docks. The street was entirely deserted. The little shanties and grand halls were boarded up as tightly as if the residents expected a hurricane.

She ran, fearing that any second the Gesellschaft would spring its trap. The escape seemed too simple. It was as if the Keeper had grown weary of attempting to re-educate her and was sending her back to Vanderdecken. But such generosity, Elizabeth knew, could only hide a trap. She slowed to a walk, sneaking from the shadow of one shanty to another, and prepared herself to strike anything that appeared even remotely alive.

Finally, Elizabeth reached the last shanty and settled down in its shadows to wait for Vanderdecken to come ashore. Her heart beat so rapidly and powerfully that the pit of her stomach fluttered. Trying to calm herself, she breathed in short, shallow gasps. She closed her eyes, concentrating on the red, pulsating light inside her eyelids. Slowly, her breathing deepened and her pulse slowed. The pulsing red light became gentle, throbbing more and more slowly until Elizabeth no longer feared anything. Vanderdecken would come, as planned, and she would know what to do.

The thunder of cannons snapped Elizabeth out of her reverie, and she opened her eyes. The frigate lay motionless just a few hundred feet from shore. The black smoke of its guns rose into the night.

Elizabeth stood, studying the ground between herself and the shore. It was barren. Her eyes fell on the edge of the sea, and she spied Vanderdecken's dinghy slipping along the piers. Rodgers sat in the stern, rowing as quietly as possible. Vanderdecken knelt in the bow, his cutlass drawn.

Elizabeth's instincts took control of her body, and she charged toward the dinghy in a mad, savage fury.

Vanderdecken saw her and jumped the short distance to shore, his cutlass poised to attack anything chasing her out of the shadows. Rodgers drew his cutlass and waded into the water a second later.

"Hurry," Vanderdecken called, "we haven't all night. The *Shanna* will pass soon. We must be on it, or they will leave us!"

As she approached Vanderdecken, she swung the wand into his ribs with vicious glee. He collapsed immediately, his mouth agape in surprise.

Elizabeth threw the wand aside and snatched his cutlass, raising it to strike. As she started to bring the blade down, Rodgers reached over her shoulder and grabbed her forearm.

"Do you want to kill him?" Rodgers screamed, then jerked Elizabeth around to face him.

Elizabeth didn't answer, still too engulfed by her rage to respond.

"Snap out of it, Miss!" Rodgers yelled, his eyes opened wide in incomprehension. He shook her shoulders harshly.

Elizabeth relaxed for a moment, as if she no longer wanted to strike. "I meant nothing to him," she said.

Rodgers' grip relaxed. "No, Miss," he said, "the Cap'n, he sailed the *Dunkle Zee* seven years to come back!"

Elizabeth jerked free and hit him alongside the head with the hilt of the cutlass. Rodgers stumbled back, blood trickling from his temple. She turned back to Vanderdecken, raising the sword.

Seven years! It had been only seven years, but it seemed an eternity. To Vanderdecken, it must have seemed seven eternities. Yet, he had come back!

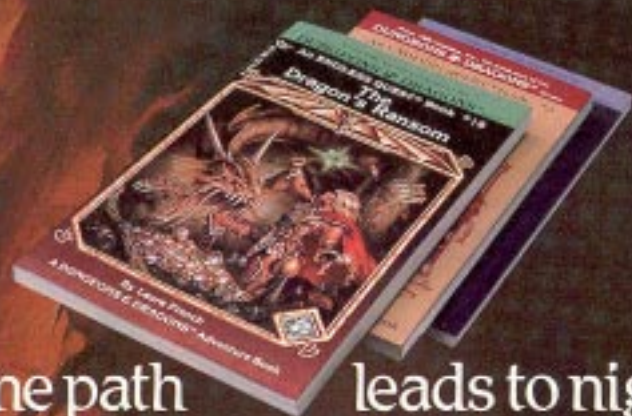
A surge of calm overcame Elizabeth, and she started to throw the cutlass aside. Before she could release it, though, Rodgers smashed his sword hilt into the back of her neck. A blinding pain shot through her head, and she collapsed.

**E**LIZABETH AWOKE TO THE THUNDER OF cannons. Her arms and legs were bound. She had been returned to her cell.

The Keeper held her throbbing head in its lap, examining the wound at the base of her skull. When it saw she had awakened, it lifted her so she could observe Vanderdecken's frigate leaving the harbor. She could barely see the green running lights of the *Shanna* crossing the harbor's mouth two miles out.

"So, you discovered a third choice, E-beth." The Keeper paused, stroking her hair gently. "You chose to accept Vanderdecken's punishment for him. He will believe you have betrayed him, so you will not have his love. And once I leave, your cell will be locked forever, so you will not have your freedom." The Keeper rested her head back onto the slab. "I would not have had the courage to make such a choice."





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#### ON THE COVER

In the cover picture by Larry Elmore, spacecraft from a rival corporation raid a mining colony heavily defended by the Galactic Task Force. "The Mighty Mega-Corporations" (p. 65) puts new meaning into the phrase "price war." Cover by Larry Elmore.

64 SEPTEMBER 1984

To begin with, Jerry Tiritilli should be given credit for his cover illustration of the attack of The Apocalypse in last month's ARES™ Section. Through a combination of editorial oversight and bad luck, his name was not credited in that issue. Sorry, Jerry.

Awards! If you'll flip to p. 69, you'll find the ARES Awards announcement, and you are urged to enter. You'll get the chance to honor the games that you feel are the best of the science-fiction lot. (We also offer prizes).

In this issue, we have a description of the Corporate Wars in the STAR FRONTIERS® game, a GAMMA WORLD® game feature on mutant animals as player characters, and the MARVEL®-Phile, in which two sea-dwelling superbeings make their first appearance for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game.

Continuing the series of lunar portraits from issue #87, we present the OTHER SUNS™ game's view of our closest planetary neighbor, by Niall Shapero, the game's designer. If you thought the GAMMA WORLD game's Moon was rough. . . .

Because of space limitations, the StarQuestions column will appear next month instead of this month (sorry, Penny). It will cover the GAMMA WORLD game's finer points (what can a 1 cm tall character attack with?)

The games that most of our readers want to see are the GAMMA WORLD, STAR FRONTIERS, and MARVEL SUPER HEROES games. We certainly plan to support these games, and your articles certainly help.

We have also received requests for articles on the TRAVELLER®, CHAMPIONS®, VILLAINS & VIGILANTES™, STAR TREK®, AFTERMATH™, CAR WARS™, and STAR FLEET BATTLES™ games. Unfortunately, we receive very little on these very games. If you'd like to try your hand at article writing, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the ARES department and ask for our writers guidelines. You might also send word on what article ideas you want to try, so we can let you know if what you want to do is what we want to see. Until next month, cheers!

*The editors*

#### ARES™ Section 89

#### THE SCIENCE-FICTION GAMING SECTION

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# The Mighty Mega-Corporations

## *STAR FRONTIERS® game background*

by Kim Eastland

STAR FRONTIERS game characters confront a number of identifiable organizations throughout the course of their adventures (Star Law, the Sathar war machine, spy networks, etc.), but one organization stands out from all the rest: the Pan-Galactic Corporation.

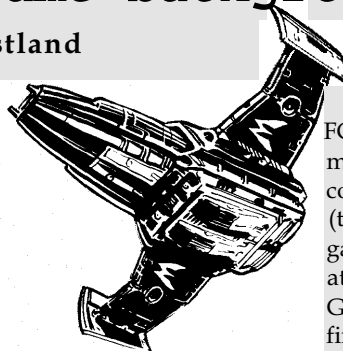
The STAR FRONTIERS Alpha Dawn basic game rules list Pan-Galactic as "the oldest and largest interstellar company." The history section explains how Pan-Galactic was established: "Soon, settled worlds in the Frontier became melting pots for the four races, with dazzling mixtures of architecture and alien cultures. To supply the needs of these worlds, the first interstellar company, the Pan-Galactic Corporation, was formed. It developed interests everywhere, from scientific research to farming to spaceship building. PGC even created its own language, Pan-Galactic, which soon became the most common language of all races on Frontier worlds; Many large companies which started later were modeled on PGC, but none approach the size or power of the Pan-Galactic Corporation."

In the STAR FRONTIERS Knight Hawks game, Pan-Galactic is mentioned as the largest of over a half dozen huge and multi-faceted corporations operating in the Frontier. How and when did Pan-Galactic's monopoly on the Frontier fail? Where did these other companies come from? The status of the mega-corps is the subject of this article.

The establishment of the PGC as the major mega-corporation on the Frontier was designed into the basic rules as a starting point from which game referees could launch their own scheme-of-things for corporate structures. The information given in the original STAR FRONTIERS Alpha Dawn game was applicable for the time of the First Sathar War. The information given for the Knight Hawks game is specifically placed at the beginning of the Second Sathar War, decades later. This article's material is based on the time period after the Second Sathar War, at the start of the Corporate Wars that followed. This allows referees to pick the time period their campaigns will occur in as well as the campaigns' locations.

### Corporate History

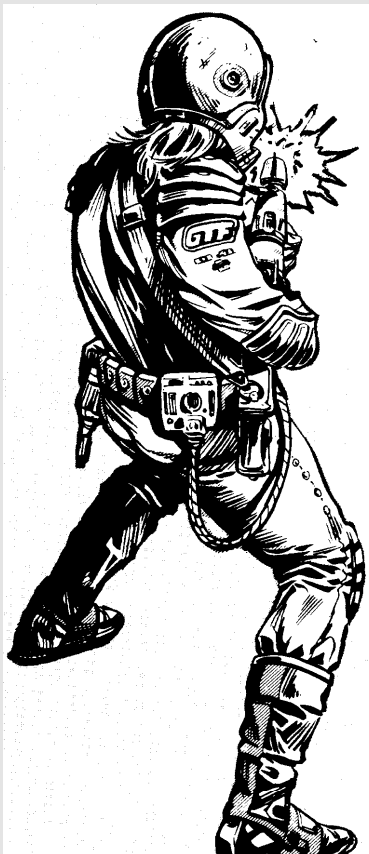
Before discussing the "current" mega-corps, we should take a look at the past. The first large interstellar company was the Pan-Galactic Corporation; it is no exaggeration to say that the PGC ruled the Frontier in the early days. Like the great railroad corporations of late 19th- and early 20th-century Earth, the PGC was the only fast, safe way to travel through an unknown frontier for the millions of pioneers who yearned for land and their own fortunes. The PGC had its fingers in every pie, controlling financing, transportation, mining, industrial and agricultural organizations, and more on the Frontier worlds.



There is a lot to thank the FGC for in this early developmental period. It founded a common unit of currency (the credit), established the galactic board of trade, created and spread the Pan-Galactic common language, financed innumerable scientific breakthroughs that led frontiersmen further and further into space, and did much, much more.

But there were great problems inherent with the one-company system. Corporate corruption became rife on the less civilized worlds. Often whole planets and races were at the mercy of the PGC's concept of "morality," and too often aesthetic values were lost to financial ones. No competition meant stagnation in many industrial areas and complete control of the economic system by a single entity. Possibly the worst problem, however, was the lack of autonomy on a planetary and interstellar scale because of the overwhelming dependence of the Frontier on one source for all its needs. Because of this last factor, it was inevitable that PGC would lose its monopoly on the Frontier.

During the period between the Sathar Wars, secret financial groups sprang up, investing money in land and various industrial operations and gaining power until their size could no longer be hidden from the PGC's eyes. Many of these initial investments were made in cities, planetary governments and militias, and even in the UPF itself. By the time PGC recognized its potential rivals, it



was too late; their footholds were established, and with them came planetary autonomy. Pan-Galactic's hold over the Frontier was broken at last. The new corporations decided to fight PGC on its own ground, making diverse investments and establishing their operations in the same areas as PGC's own operations.

This last point is very important, because without it, the Sathar could not have presented a serious threat to the UPF in the form of a Second Sathar War. Escalating competition between the larger companies, particularly PGC, the Streel Corporation, Greater Vrusk Mutual Prosperity Institution, and Cassidine Development Corporation, led to armed conflicts that required much of Star Law's and Spacefleet's time and energy to monitor and quell. Many galactic historians agree that without this debilitating distraction, the UPF forces would have been far better prepared for the Second Sathar War. For an example of Star Law's need to keep constant surveillance over the Frontier, see the STAR FRONTIERS® module SF4, *Mission to Alcazzar*.

With the coming of SWII, investments and corporate focus changed radically and swiftly. Many executives and design teams left the established mega-corps to found their own companies, aimed at far more specialized areas. Financing became available through planetary and galactic bonds created to increase local industry and jobs. Because of this shift of talent, many of the established mega-corps decided not to compete with these emerging companies, choosing to shut down those particular operations of their own which were now forced into competition. The logic behind this was based on the larger investment firms' solid belief that specialized companies could not grow to any significant size and, thus, would later be merged back into existing mega-corps.

This was a disastrous mistake by the few mega-corps of those pre-war years and clearly shows the tunnel vision and lack of foresight which permeated the top executive levels at that time. The specialized firms grew at unprecedented rates and reinvested their income in their own specific areas, not in mergers and outside acquisitions. Because of this, within years, the thought of traveling with anyone but Trans-Travel or buying weapons from anyone but WarTech Inc., was all but absurd. They were the best in their fields, were reliable, and were competitive in their pricing lest some upstart company gain an advantage on them. In short, they represented reliabil-

ity in many areas that the PGC could not even compete in.

The single greatest factor preventing those embryonic firms from being swallowed by their richer cousins once they were successful was the UPF Anti-monopoly and Merger Laws, passed during the Second Sathar War. Wishing to discourage centralized industry, the UPF enacted numerous laws that prevented complete monopolies from forming and laid down complicated guidelines for mergers. So effective were these laws in curbing continuing corporate tyranny that they were kept "on the books" following SWII. The animosity some of the older mega-corps felt towards the UPF Governing Council's decision to keep these laws is still felt today.

### The Corporate Wars

The term "Corporate Wars" was not coined until a decade after SWII. The first use of the term was by WarTech, Inc., in a special weapons catalog they released for various industries. The media quickly picked up on the term and pumped it to its sensationalistic best (after all, things had been pretty calm since SWII).

The true beginnings of the Corporate Wars are actually decades old. In fact, they started before SWII began. The confrontation that started the war is described in the STAR FRONTIERS® Knight Hawks game: "Laco's World (Dixon's Star) is the scene of a decade-long conflict between the Streel Corporation on one side and Pan-Galactic Corporation operating through the Galactic Task Force on the other. Tens of thousands of casualties have been inflicted on the planet, and more than a dozen space-ships have been destroyed in what has come to be called 'Laco's War'." This war started and was settled before SWII, the results decided by PGC's extravagant military expenditures. This set the pattern for future corporate conflicts of an "unnegotiable nature."

At first, the UPF could not afford to go to war with every corporation who raised an army or space fleet. With the sudden reintervention of the Sathar, culminating in SWII, corporations ceased their hostilities to combine their efforts against the common foe. But the end of the war quickly brought resumed tensions and private military escalations began anew. This time, however, the UPF was mobilized for such occurrences. New laws gave Star Law more power over corporate infringement on other corporate operations and prop-

erty. Spacefleet was rearmed and could easily intimidate smaller fleets. For a while it looked like the UPF forces could prevent any occurrences leading to further "Laco's Wars."

Unfortunately, the government didn't reckon with the mega-corps greed or resources. A combination of swelled mega-corporate coffers from the Second Sathar War, thousands of unemployed soldiers no longer on the UPF's payroll, and the emergence of specialized companies who thrived on military conflict resulted in an escalation of corporation warfare to a previously unknown level.

In addition to covert Sathar, Mech-anon, and pirate activities, the UPF security forces now had to deal with full scale invasions, sieges, and battles fought by over a dozen mega-corps and conglomerates of smaller firms. It is during this time period that the information in this article (*and the one following in next month's ARES™ Section - Ed.*) applies.

### Stages of a Corporate War

To better understand the Corporate Wars, one must go to Star Law and their guideword for rookie Deputy Officers: ICEWARS! This acronym outlines the seven steps of escalation usually seen in a Corporate War:

\* *Interest conflict* — A conflict of interest develops between two corporate entities over mineral rights, world development rights, or whatever.

\* *Corporate espionage* — Usually an increase in corporate spying takes place after the initial conflict of interest develops. If results indicate the opposing corporations' goals are not in actual conflict, then the entire matter is cleared up immediately.

\* *Economic sanctions* — If espionage does indicate a conflict exists, economic sanctions are imposed to pressure the opposing corporation out of the conflict. Sometimes this works, sometimes it doesn't.

\* *Withdrawal* — When economic sanctions do not pressure either side out of a conflict of interest, then a rapid withdrawal of corporate personnel and equipment from the site begins. This "pullout" sometimes confuses opponents into believing the economic sanctions worked. Generally, it is a prelude to war.

\* *Armed Conflict* — Once a site is deemed to be vacated by a corporation of any potential "hostage" personnel or material, mercenaries are sent in to "hold" the site while "negotiations" proceed.

\* *Reinforcements* — The inevitable hostilities are exchanged and reinforcements are sent in to "protect the corporate interests." The actual war has now begun and "negotiations" continue to be held while the war continues. The length of the war varies. The shortest war on record was between two moon-mining colonies around Outer Reach in the Dramune system. A stray maxi-missile with two high explosive warheads bit a cache of TD-19 in a tin hut and the blast of shrapnel punctured every spacesuit worn in the battle. Actual battle time: 3 minutes. Casualties: 135 dead. The longest war on record is the great PGC-Streel War over Laco in Dixon's Star system. Actual battle time: 10 years. Casualties: 235,000 dead, 367,000 wounded, 170 tril-credits in equipment destroyed.

\* *Stabilization* — When one corporation wishes to withdraw from the conflict, because of the drain on its resources or the inevitability of its defeat, the "negotiations" suddenly become serious and the conflict is usually resolved within a week. Terms of "surrender" range from full reparations for the victorious corporation's financial outlay to the withdrawal

of the losing corporation's forces.

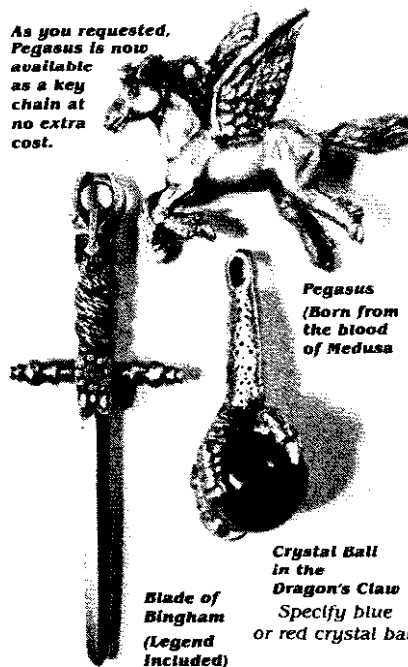
It should be remembered that these wars are no longer fought on developed worlds within the Frontier. Nearly all battles occur on newly discovered worlds and moons. If a corporate war is seriously effecting the health or welfare of a planet on the Frontier, Spacefleet may step in and end the conflict in the swiftest, surest fashion it knows, by space bombardment, blockade, and other procedures. No corporation has ever won a battle with Spacefleet's forces.

For campaign play's sake, it is also important for the referee to remember that forces within the mega-corps often make for unpredictable developments. Power struggles between executives are commonplace. The cadres, akin to modern labor unions, are strong in certain industries, and a planetary government certainly affects a mega-corps operating procedures (not to mention the effects of the UPF government and Star Law on corporate policies).

Look for a detailed list of the major mega-corporations of the Frontier in next month's *ARES™* Section.

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# Luna, The Empire and the Stars

*The Moon in the OTHER SUNS™ game*

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Colony One landed on the northern rim of Copernicus crater in January of the year 51 of the Atomic Era (A.D. 1996). Fourteen on-site colonists touched down in a modified Manta-type shuttlecraft (successor to the Enterprise-type shuttles of the late '30s and early '40s).

Operators on Earth, working through waldoes, ran heavy machinery for the colony on a round-the-clock basis. With the assistance of the teleoperators, a lunar mass driver assembly was made operational by the end of A.E. 54; by the time it was ready for use, lunar mining shiploads by the kiloton were waiting at the injector head. Though there were only fifty on-site colonists by this date, the teleoperators on Earth numbered over fifteen thousand.

The Earth-based teleoperators enabled the US lunar installations to virtually explode across Copernicus. By A.E. 60, several mass drivers were in place and operational, three solar power satellite stations (SPSS) had been built using lunar materials, and the United States was beginning to see the return on its investment.

Hampered by their lack of sophisticated computers, the Soviet Union's lunar colony (established near Tycho in A.E. 58) lagged behind its western counterpart. The Soviets, after all, had to transport workers to the moon rather than keeping them on Earth and exporting their skills to Luna via computer-

assisted waldoes. By A.E. 63 there were ten American SPSSs and only four Soviet SPSSs. Apart from their obvious civilian uses, the SPSS masers (used to broadcast power to ground stations) had military applications as well. That the US had only two hundred on-site colonists to the Soviet Union's eight thousand was considered unimportant. The US, after all, had nearly twenty-five thousand "colonists" if one counted the Earth-based teleoperators. The "orbital death ray" race was on in earnest, and the US appeared to be winning.

The lunar mines helped build orbital factories as well. Freed from gravity-induced manufacturing restrictions, these near-Earth orbit (NEO) factories produced a flood of new products which were too expensive or literally impossible to duplicate using Earth-based facilities. The first NEO factory was "on-line" in A.E. 57, and paid back its total construction cost, with interest, out of its first year's profits. Terran high-technology industries couldn't hope to compete with their orbital brethren; the stage was set for disaster.

By the late '40s, Japanese firms had come to dominate the microelectronics industry. The teleoperator systems used by NASA for the lunar colony work were, in fact, wholly built from Japanese-produced components. But NEO facilities broke the short-lived Japanese hold on the computer industry. The rising on in orbit returned the USA to a position of world

dominance in technology.

Faced with an ever-worsening trade deficit and with continued Japan-US trade restrictions born of the "good years" (when the American microelectronics and computer industries nearly ceased to exist), Japan was pushed into a closer relationship with Communist China. The forced withdrawal of US military forces from Japan in September of A.E. 61, the formal alliance between Japan and Communist China in February of A.E. 62, and the growth of the Chinese space navy throughout the fifties and early sixties, were all signs of the storm to come.

By A.E. 65, the small but growing Sino-Nipponese space navy was a force to be reckoned with in near-Earth orbit. On Sunday, 26 December, A.E. 65 (A.D. 2010 old calendar), at 0131 hours GMT, the financially bankrupt Sino-Nipponese Alliance struck at US and Soviet orbital facilities. World War III began, and the old world died.

The governments of the United States and the Soviet Union did not respond in kind to the "surgical" nuclear strikes launched by the Chinese. US and Soviet space forces destroyed the Sino-Nipponese space navy in six days, and the war ended on 1 January A.E. 66 with the destruction (by orbital maser systems) of the remaining military targets in enemy territory.

No accurate records exist of the number of military and civilian casualties inflicted by the war, but it has been estimated that two-thirds of humanity died in those six days. Of roughly two billion survivors, less than a third survived the next year.

The lunar installations did not participate directly in the war; it was over far too quickly. But had there been no lunar colonies, the cost of World War III would have been far higher. Though estimates of the aftereffects of atomic war made by scientists in the mid-'40s were overly pessimistic and inaccurate in detail, they were accurate enough as to the general consequences of such a conflict. The year after the war became known as the "year without summer;" the nuclear winter following the detonation of 3500 megatons in WWII resulted in the death of two-thirds of the terrestrial survivors, and without the aid of the lunar-built NEO stations and the technical facilities on Luna itself, humanity might well have perished.

The US-Soviet space forces were the only effective combat powers left in the world. Planetary armies had been annihilated during the war; ground-based industries were gone, and the Earth was poisoned. The cosmonauts and astronauts of the two space services, heroes in a time that denied heroism, struggled to save humanity from itself.

In A.E. 66, there were eleven thousand colonists on Luna: ten thousand Soviets and one thousand Americans. In addition, three hundred US and two thousand Soviet military personnel were permanently stationed there. Another eight thousand astronauts and cosmonauts manned Earth-orbital facilities, together with twice that number of civilian technical personnel. They had solar power, abundant construction materials from Luna, and food from hydroponic gardens in

the orbital facilities and the lunar farms. Their old homes in radioactive ruin, they set about to rebuild the world.

Luna was their industrial base, and Earth-Luna space was their home. These men had been taught the harsh lessons of survival by their extraterrestrial environment, and carried their lessons back to the mother world. Thus the Terran Federal Republic was born.

For twenty-five years, the last generation of Terran military personnel struggled to keep Earth and the dream of freedom alive. Luna was the training base, the industrial plant, and the breadbasket for the new republic. What the workers could save, they did — by bringing it into space, where a "normal" life was still possible (if still difficult). Elections, of course, were suspended "for the duration of the emergency." Both gravity control and a workable FTL stardrive were developed at the Tycho Akademy Nauk (Academy of Science) on Luna during this period.

By A.E. 90, however, the new generation of Space Force personnel, born and raised on Luna and the Orbital Bases (as they were now called), was ready for a new dream. Earth had been saved, but only 400 million humans lived there and their numbers decreased by nearly a million each year; life on the homeworld had become "nasty, brutish, and short." The Spacers numbered eight million (nearly five million on Luna), and were growing at a rate of 3% per year.

Unfortunately, three generals of the USSov Combined Aerospace Command decided to "correct" the political troubles of the Terran Federal Republic by replacing it with a new military government (with themselves as leaders, of course). On March 9th, A.E. 90, they acted, and a nuclear "accident" killed nearly half of Tycho colony's 1.3 million people. But the "accident" failed in its primary goal — to kill every other general rank officer of the Combined Command. General Mikhail Sergeivitch Malinkov, head of the Tycho Space Defense Command, escaped the cataclysm with four members of his staff. The Triumvirate seized power on Luna.

In the chaos that followed the loss of nearly 10% of its population and 25% of its industrial capacity, Luna halted export of all luxury goods and nearly halted the export of food and other essentials to the orbital colonies. Dependent upon Luna for much of their supplies, the last of the independent orbital

## The First Annual ARES™ Awards

What were the best science-fiction games you ever played? We're interested in finding out, and we want to recognize those games that the readers of the ARES™ Section enjoy most of all. We are polling you, the reader, to answer this question.

Cast your ballot (only one per person, please) in the first annual ARES Awards by writing down the names of your five favorite science-fiction games on a postcard or 3" x 5" index card, with the games' manufacturers. Mail your entry to ARES Awards, Dragon Publishing, P.O. Box 110, Lake Geneva, WI, 53147. Any game published between 1960 and this year is eligible (even if it is no longer in print). If you cannot come up with five games you like, any number up to five is also acceptable.

The voting will be open until 1 November 1984, at which time the ARES Section editors will count up the votes and list the winners in the January 1985 issue of DRAGON® Magazine. Remember to put your name and address on your ballot.

And another thing: three names will be drawn at random from the entries we receive, and those three people will get a special prize from the ARES editors. Remember, only one ballot per person, and print or type as clearly as possible.

colonies came under direct Triumvirate control within six months. By mid-A.E. 91, a reign of terror had begun on Luna and the colonies. Over two hundred thousand lunar and orbital colonists were executed for "counterrevolutionary activities" before rebel forces, lead by General Malinkov, overthrew the Triumvirate in early A.E. 93.

A thankful populace offered General Malinkov a position as "President for Life of Luna and the Orbital Colonies." Over the next twenty-five years, General Malinkov refused the offer three times. The fourth time the offer was made, the title had been changed to "Emperor of Earth and Luna." Mikhail I's coronation was held in Copernicus colony on the 19th of September, in the 119th year of the Atomic Era. Humanity, never satisfied with democracy, returned once more to the security of hereditary monarchy.

During the last days of the Terran Federal Republic, the stardrive opened the galaxy to mankind. As had happened before in human history, the colonists were often the dregs of mankind; offered the choice of "death by hanging or transportation for life," many criminals became pioneers. This colonization procedure continued under the Provisional Government that followed Triumvirate rule, with political prisoners being added to the list of those offered the choice of exile. Under the rule of Mikhail I, political offenders were not offered a choice — they were all exiled to colonies lit by the light of other suns than Sol.

When Mikhail I died of old age in A.E. 126, his son Alexei I inherited an empire that stretched from Earth-Luna out to the stars. Alexei I, the Architect, designed the capital of the new Terran Empire. His son, Mikhail II, saw the completion of the capital on the lunar farside in A.E. 148. By the end of Mikhail II's reign in A.E. 198, the human race numbered three billion — seven hundred million on Luna and the Orbital Bases, three hundred million on Earth, one hundred million on colonies in the asteroid belt, and the rest in extra-solar colonies.

Under royal charter, the Alderson Naval Engineering Corporation was established on Luna in A.E. 147 "to promote and support the improvement of Terran Imperial Navy craft." Over the next century and a half, Alderson Naval Engineering and its successor company, Alderson Shipyards, did just that. Luna became the industrial and financial backbone of the Empire, as well as its capital world. When the sons and daughters of exiled colonists returned to Sol system to make their fortunes, they came not to backwater Earth, home though it might have been to mankind, but to the shining lights of the Imperial Capital, Luna.

During the Outworlds' Rebellion against the Empire (A.E. 319-331), Luna became a front-line military base as well. At the height of the rebellion in A.E. 326, Luna was under continuous attack by Rebel naval forces for nearly six months. The capital did not fall, and the Empire did not permit the Outworlds' Alliance to secede. While still mounting guard over the conquered worlds of the Alliance, the Empire met its first equal in space — the L'Doran Hegemony.

After fifteen years of increasingly serious contact problems, the Terran Empire found itself at war with the L'Doran Hegemony in A.E. 396. After its military defeat in one year, the Empire managed to have the peace negotiations held on Earth. It may have been one of the best decisions the First Empire made. The Hegemonic envoys were certain that the home-world of humanity (which they had never before seen) had to be the industrial and military heart of the Empire, and they carried this misinformation back to their superiors. Luna, they decided, was a military base of little overall strategic importance.

Luna was a strongpoint of the Empire during the Outworlds' Rebellion, and it was strengthened every year thereafter. The terms imposed after the First Hegemony-Empire War restricted lunar military facilities but made no mention of industrial capacity. It was the most serious blunder the Hegemonic negotiators made, and they made many.

The military defenses of Earth-Luna were moved to the asteroid belt, and Luna geared up for another war. Luna built Triangle, Crossfire, and Starkeep deep space stations between the orbits of Uranus and Neptune. As a last line of defense, Infield Station was constructed in the asteroid belt. When humanity burst from its restricted worlds in A.E. 411, it was much better prepared for battle; lunar industries and scientific labs saw to that. Of Luna's eight hundred million people, fully one hundred million were trained space navy personnel.

Unfortunately for the First Empire, the L'Doran Hegemony was a multi-species confederacy that stretched a third of the way around the galaxy, with over a million member races. At its height, the First Empire held sway over a region 1200 light-years across, centered about Sol, with a mere two hundred slave races under its control. By A.E. 436, with the Second Hegemony-Empire War drawing to an end, the First Empire only controlled the space within 10 astronomical units of Sol (roughly nine hundred million miles, or 1.4 billion kilometers).

Crossfire, Triangle, and Starkeep were "neutralized" within days after Hegemonic naval forces arrived in the Sol System. Infield held out for nearly three months and then dropped out of communications. In late June A.E. 436, the battle moved toward Earth and Luna. Convinced that Earth was the heart of the First Empire, the attacking Hegemonic fleet concentrated its bombardment on that world, and Luna was spared the full force of the assault. By early August the war was over.

When the last elements of the Hegemonic warfleet left the Sol System in late August, Earth was a blackened cinder, its upper one hundred kilometers of rock blasted away, its atmosphere and oceans boiled off. The proud belt colonies were gone; only Infield was left, deep within Ceres (still "hot" enough on its surface to kill an unshielded human in ten minutes). There were six hundred survivors there out of the original complement of twelve thousand, among them Nicolai II, last member of the Imperial family. In scattered warrens deep beneath the lunar surface, there were three million survivors.

The Second Empire started with Luna, the surviving libraries and laboratories of the capital, and three million people. It was nearly nine hundred years before they managed to build their first FTL starship, but they never lost the secret of gravity control and they never lost hope. The capital has since moved to a more hospitable world far from Luna, and Luna with her two billion people is just another member world of the Second Empire, harsher than many, friendlier than some. But after thirteen centuries the people of Luna still remember their losses, and the glory that was theirs.

Humanity/Luna (A.E. 1782): Classification MHH2, Societal type S15R7. Single central government organized along military lines. Religious organizations cultivate veneration of the God-Emperor (absent from Luna since relocation of the capital in the 14th century A.E.). Population is distributed equally among one hundred thousand "defense bases" scattered across Luna. The Imperial Military Academy remains the major source of extra-solar credit. A harsh world with a stubborn people, Luna supplies a disproportionate share of the flag rank officers of the Second Empire's Space Navy.



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# Of Grizzly Bears



by John M. Maxstadt

## *Mutant animal characters in*

There are three classes of player characters allowed in the current GAMMA WORLD® game rules: pure strain human, mutated humanoid, and mutated animal. The first two are based on a single species, *Homo sapiens*, whose attributes and abilities are fairly well known. Some abilities, such as physical attacks with weapons and speed of movement, are defined in the rules. Others, including diet, longevity, size and shape, are obvious, or at worst can be looked up in the *Guinness Book of World Records*.

The mutated animal class, on the other hand, incorporates the entire animal kingdom, meaning everything from the blue whale to the amoeba. If four players choose to play a bumblebee, a white rhinoceros, an ostrich, and a moray eel, the Game Master has a problem. No rule or guideline tells him how to assign number of attacks, damage per attack, movement, maximum lifespan, and other vital statistics.

My solution to this problem is to select the families of animals most likely to be played, combine them into a few collective types, and generate statistics for each of these types. Three considerations go into these tasks: logic, zoological fact, and game balance. Of these, game balance is the most crucial, but all three can generally be worked into an acceptable compromise.

The GAMMA WORLD Basic Rules Booklet stipulates that mutated animal player characters be "near human-sized," so that rolled scores in physical strength, constitution and hit points will make sense. Otherwise, how many hit points would a mosquito have? In my campaigns, I allow players to use animals whose largest dimensions are between three and twelve feet (from half to twice as tall as a human) to allow for reasonable variety of animal characters. Minimum and maximum physical strength and constitution scores are imposed on the largest and smallest creatures, respectively.

In adventures that take place almost exclusively on land, it is logical that player characters should all be able to breathe air and walk or fly. Game balance requires that animals with crippling defects also be excluded (a giant tortoise is too slow, a tapir lacks effective attacks, etc.). Other creatures were excluded from discussion here when it became clear that they were distinctly less effective than one of the included types. An ostrich, for example, can run and kick, but not nearly as well as a horse; a badger could be a nasty opponent, but not when compared to a bear.

Faced with these restrictions, there will always be a player who'll say, "Yes, but with the right *mutations* . . ." True, the ideal mutations would enable the

player's killer whale to fly, his giant tortoise to burn up the track, or his bumblebee to be eight feet long and have plenty of hit points. But what if the player doesn't roll the ideal mutations? It is suggested that the players choose their animal types after they roll their ability scores but before they roll their mutations, so that the ability scores are appropriate to the animal type but the animal type is not necessarily tailor-made for the mutations (otherwise, all characters with electrical generation will be constricting snakes, all those with multiple arms will be monkeys or apes, etc.). Under this system, it is not fair to allow one player to keep rolling until he gets the mutations needed to make a particular animal viable, while everyone else has to accept the mutations they roll the first time.

Game balance was important in determining the statistics of each animal type. Different advantages and disadvantages were used to compensate for one another; one animal type may have superior attacks, but another will have a better armor class or the ability to use weapons or some other highly effective special ability. Outside of the demands of game balance, I've tried to keep the statistics as close to zoological fact as possible.

Some of the statistics require explanation. *Examples* is a list of animals that



# and Chimpanzees

## the GAMMA WORLD® game

fall into the designated type, arranged from smallest to largest. If "the largest" or "all but the smallest" of an animal family is stipulated, individual species should be checked to see whether they fall into the size range given. Players should be allowed to select the species they prefer, but the largest species should be reserved for characters with very high constitution and/or physical strength scores. Research may show that an allowed species differs markedly from the others in the type on one or more statistics. The GM may, at his option, allow such variations, but game balance should be considered at all times — for example, a cheetah is much faster for short sprints than other big cats, but it cannot retract its claws to move silently.

*Height* is from head to foot, and implies that the animal is able to stand more-or-less erect. The exception to this is the herbivore group, in which height is shoulder height. Length is from muzzle to rump, except in the case of saurians and snakes, which are measured from snout to tail tip (for this reason, the largest of them exceed the 12' dimension limit).

*Weight* can be changed by addition or subtraction of body parts, by mutation, or by a general change in size. Remember that a change in height or length is accompanied by a *cubed* change in

weight, so that a character that becomes three times as tall as normal becomes 27 times as heavy.

*Lifespan* is the maximum number of years that a character might live before dying of old age (human lifespan is considered to be 100 years). *Diet* includes the only foods an animal is able to eat and digest (not merely its preferences).

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***"The mutated animal class incorporates the entire animal kingdom. . . from the blue whale to the amoeba."***

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Saurians and birds, for example, are unable to chew and swallow fresh meat from large animals. *Sight*, *Hearing*, and *Smell* are rated relative to other animals, with human senses being considered "normal." A "superior" sense could be considered equal to a mutationally heightened one.

*Manipulation* refers to the ability of an animal to grasp objects, push buttons, turn knobs, etc., with its paws or claws. "None" and "full" are self-explanatory; "grasp and carry" means that the creature could pick up and move a reasonably large and conveniently shaped object (like a grenade) or turn a wheel, but not type, pull a trigger, or wield a sword.

*Vocalization* lists the vocal sounds a creature can make to give an idea of the limitations of its vocal expression (primates, of course, could be taught sign languages). If two or more sounds are joined with "or," the individual species in that group can make no more than one of those sounds each.

*Minimums* and *Maximums* refer to ability scores. Minimum requirements for a type must be met by the original dice roll, but a player may voluntarily lower his ability scores to get under the maximum for a desired animal type. Mutations may allow a character to exceed his maximums; for example, "taller" (or "larger" for animals) will allow a monkey, rattlesnake, or vulture to regain his original constitution and physical strength score if they were lowered to qualify for the animal type, and "heightened dexterity" will allow an alligator to have a dexterity score over 14. *Special Abilities*, *Special Disabilities*, and *Special Attacks* will be explained in some detail in the notes on each animal type following the statistics tables.

A final note — the statistics are intended to represent the abilities and attributes of an animal *before mutation* occurs. Mutations may change an animal's size, movement, attacks, senses, special abilities, and so on. These statistics are intended only as a base to build mutated animal characters on.



## CARNIVOROUS MAMMALS

	<b>Bears</b>	<b>Big Cats</b>
<b>Examples:</b>	All but the smallest black bears; cinnamon bear, brown bears, polar bear, grizzly bear, kodiak bear.	Pumas, cheetahs, snow leopards, leopards, jaguars, lions, tigers.
<b>Length or Height:</b>	2-4 meters tall	1.5-3 meters long
<b>Weight:</b>	150-650 kg	60-300 kg
<b>Lifespan:</b>	35 years	25 years
<b>Diet:</b>	Insects, meat, fish roots, honey, carrion	Meat, fish, carrion
<b>Attacks:</b>	Claw/claw/bite	Claw/claw/bite
<b>Damage:</b>	1-8/1-8/2-12	2-5/2-5/3-12/
<b>Armor:</b>	8	9
<b>Land Speed:</b>	18/1350/27	18/1350/27
<b>Water Speed:</b>	0/225/9	0/0/6
<b>Sight:</b>	Normal	Normal
<b>Hearing:</b>	Good	Superior
<b>Smell:</b>	Superior	Good
<b>Manipulation:</b>	Grasp and carry	None
<b>Vocalization:</b>	Grunt, while, bellow	Purr, snarl, roar
<b>Special Abilities:</b>	Climb trees	Move silently, see in dark, climb trees
<b>Special Disabilities:</b>	None	None
<b>Minimums:</b>	Physical Strength 14, Constitution 13	Physical Strength 12, Dexterity 14
<b>Maximums:</b>	None	None

## HERBIVOROUS MAMMALS

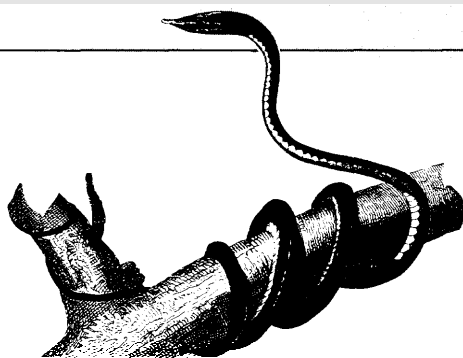
	<b>Horned</b>	<b>Hornless</b>
<b>Examples:</b>	The larger deer, goats, and bighorn sheep; antelope, hartebeest, gnu, elk, caribou, oxen, moose, deer, buffaloes, bison.	Onagers, donkeys, mules and hinnies, zebras, horses, camels and dromedaries.
<b>Length:</b>	2-4 meters tall	2-3.5 meters long
<b>Height:</b>	1-3 meters tall	1.5-2.5 meters tall
<b>Weight:</b>	60-1200 kg	200-900 kg
<b>Lifespan:</b>	30 years	60 years
<b>Diet:</b>	Grass, bark, leaves	Grass, grains
<b>Attacks:</b>	Butt or kick/kick	Kick/kick
<b>Damage:</b>	2-12 or 1-6/1-6	1-10/1-10
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Charge for 4-24 (2d6x2), trample	Trample
<b>Armor:</b>	9	10
<b>Land Speed:</b>	21/1600/32	30/1800/36
<b>Sight:</b>	Normal	Normal
<b>Hearing:</b>	Superior	Superior
<b>Smell:</b>	Good	Superior
<b>Manipulation:</b>	None	None
<b>Vocalization:</b>	Bleat or bellow	Bray or whinny or none (camel)
<b>Special Abilities:</b>	Carry riders, pull carts	Carry riders, pull carts, jump walls
<b>Special Disabilities:</b>	Trouble getting through doorways	Trouble climbing
<b>Minimums:</b>	Physical Strength 9, Constitution 11, Dexterity 8	Physical Strength 11, Constitution 12, Dexterity 8
<b>Maximums:</b>	None	None

## PRIMATES

	<b>Arboreal Monkeys</b>	<b>Terrestrial Monkeys</b>
<b>Examples:</b>	The larger howler monkeys; woolly monkeys, spider monkeys.	The larger guenons; baboons, drills, mandrills.
<b>Height:</b>	Under 1 meter tall	1-1.5 meters tall
<b>Weight:</b>	10-15 kg	15-60 kg
<b>Lifespan:</b>	20 years	35 years
<b>Diet:</b>	Insects, fruit, vegetables, nuts	Grass, eggs, fruit, meat, small animals and reptiles
<b>Attacks:</b>	Bite	Bite
<b>Damage:</b>	1-2	1-10
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Weapon use	Weapon use
<b>Armor:</b>	10	9
<b>Land Speed:</b>	9/700/14	12/1000/22
<b>Brachiating Speed:</b>	9/1000/22	Nil
<b>Sight:</b>	Normal	Normal
<b>Hearing:</b>	Normal	Normal
<b>Smell:</b>	Normal	Good
<b>Manipulation:</b>	Full	Full
<b>Vocalization:</b>	Chatter, screech, howl	Chatter, scream, bark
<b>Special Abilities:</b>	Four hands, prehensile tail, climb trees	Climb trees
<b>Special Disabilities:</b>	None	None
<b>Minimums:</b>	Dexterity 15, Intelligence 9	None
<b>Maximums:</b>	Physical Strength 12, Constitution 12	None

	<b>Lesser Apes</b>	<b>Great Apes</b>
<b>Examples:</b>	Gibbons, chimpanzees.	Orangutans, gorillas.
<b>Height:</b>	1-1.5 meters tall	1.5-2 meters tall
<b>Weight:</b>	20-60 kg	75-250 kg
<b>Lifespan:</b>	45 years	40 years
<b>Diet:</b>	Fruit, leaves, bark, insects, eggs	Fruit, vegetables
<b>Attacks:</b>	Punch/punch or bite	Punch/punch
<b>Damage:</b>	1-2/1-2 or 1-3	1-4/1-4
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Weapon use	Weapon use
<b>Armor:</b>	9	8
<b>Land Speed:</b>	12/900/18	12/900/18
<b>Brachiating Speed:</b>	9/1000/22	0/600/12
<b>Sight:</b>	Normal	Normal
<b>Hearing:</b>	Normal	Normal
<b>Smell:</b>	Normal	Normal
<b>Manipulation:</b>	Full	Full
<b>Vocalization:</b>	Chatter, shriek	Grunt, bellow
<b>Special Abilities:</b>	Four hands, climb trees	Climb trees
<b>Special Disabilities:</b>	None	None
<b>Minimums:</b>	Dexterity 14, Intelligence 9	Dexterity 12, Intelligence 9, Physical Strength 14
<b>Maximums:</b>	None	None





## SNAKES

	Poisonous	Constricting
<b>Examples:</b>	The largest pit-vipers, cobras, kraits, and sea-kraits; mambas, king cobra.	Amethystine python, rock python, Indian python, reticulate python, anaconda.
<b>Length:</b>	2-2.5 meters long	7-10 meters long
<b>Weight:</b>	5-30 kg	80-200 kg
<b>Lifespan:</b>	25 years	30 years
<b>Diet:</b>	Other snakes, small animals	Meat (large animals)
<b>Attacks:</b>	Bite	Constrict
<b>Damage:</b>	1-4	2-12
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Poison, intensity 13-18	Continuous constriction
<b>Armor:</b>	8	8
<b>Land Speed:</b>	4/300/6	3/200/4
<b>Water Speed:</b>	6/450/9	6/450/9
<b>Sight:</b>	Poor	Normal
<b>Hearing:</b>	None	None
<b>Smell:</b>	Superior	Good
<b>Manipulation:</b>	None	None
<b>Vocalization:</b>	Hiss	None
<b>Special Abilities:</b>	Crawl through small openings, climb cylindrical surfaces, move silently, coil in small bundle	Crawl through small openings, climb cylindrical surfaces, move silently
<b>Special Disabilities:</b>	No ground clearance, cannot climb stairs	No ground clearance, cannot climb stairs, -2 to hit unless attacking from above
<b>Minimums:</b>	None	Physical Strength 13
<b>Maximums:</b>	Physical Strength 12, Constitution 15	None

### Special Notes

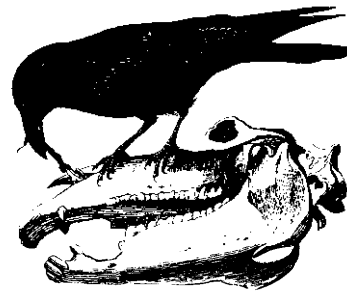
*Bears* must hit with one or both claw attacks on a natural roll of 18 or better to hug, and the opponent must not be too much larger than the bear (a death machine, for example, is too big to hug). Bears can climb trees large enough to support their weight.

*Big cats* rake only if both claw attacks hit. They may retract their claws and move silently so that they will surprise other creatures on a 1-4 and be surprised only on a one. This assumes that the character is alone or with other silent creatures and that the general surprise situation is normal — if the cat is walking down a hallway which is under surveillance by security monitor

cameras, moving silently may not accomplish much. Big cats can see 60 meters in shadow or moonlight, 30 meters in near-perfect darkness. They can climb most trees.

*Horned herbivores* do double damage if they can charge 20 meters or more straight forward to butt or gore an opponent. This takes the first half of a round, and an intelligent opponent may opt to get out of the way rather than attack. Horned herbivores kick at -2 to hit opponents in front or behind. The larger ones and those with elaborate horns may have trouble getting through narrow openings at the GM's option.

*Hornless herbivores* can ordinarily jump barriers as high as themselves with a running start (and no rider).



## BIRDS

	Birds	Saurians
<b>Examples:</b>	The larger cormorants and eagles; secretary bird, vultures, condors.	Caimans, alligators, gavial, crocodiles.
<b>Length or Height:</b>	.7-1.2 meters tall, 1.5-3 meter wingspan	2-7 meters long
<b>Weight:</b>	2-12 kg	70-1000 kg
<b>Lifespan:</b>	75 years	50 years
<b>Diet:</b>	Smaller birds, and animals, fish, carrion	Fish, small animals, carrion
<b>Attacks:</b>	Claw/claw or peck	Bite or tailslap (both if surrounded)
<b>Damage:</b>	1-4/1-4 or 1-3	3-18 or 1-8
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	None	None
<b>Armor:</b>	10	6
<b>Land Speed:</b>	0/50/2	6/450/9
<b>Air Speed:</b>	24/1800/36	Nil
<b>Water Speed:</b>	Nil	10/900/18
<b>Sight:</b>	Superior	Normal
<b>Hearing:</b>	Normal	Poor
<b>Smell:</b>	Good	Good
<b>Manipulation:</b>	Grasp and carry	None
<b>Vocalization:</b>	Squawk, Shriek	Grunt, bellow
<b>Special Abilities:</b>	None	None
<b>Special Disabilities:</b>	Must be airborne to use claws, attacks only one round in three	Poor ground clearance, sluggish in cold
<b>Minimums:</b>	Dexterity 12	Physical Strength 10, Constitution 12
<b>Maximums:</b>	Physical Strength 10, Constitution 12	Dexterity 14

Other jumping abilities will depend on the situation. Camels can, of course, go for days without food or water (it is suggested that a 17 constitution be the minimum for camel characters). Onagers, zebras, horses, and camels may have trouble climbing stairs or rocky surfaces (like mountain sides) at the GM's option — they could climb a ramp with no difficulty, however.

All herbivores can pull carts or chariots and carry riders. The size of the cart, chariot, or rider would depend on the size of the herbivore — it takes a herbivore 200 kg or heavier to satisfactorily carry a normal human rider. All herbivores can trample instead of making another attack. Trampling does 1d4 damage per hoof for every factor of two

that the herbivore outweighs its opponent. At twice its opponent's weight, a herbivore may trample for 1d4; at four times its weight, 2d4, at eight times its weight for 3d4, etc., to a maximum of 10d4. A herbivore may trample only opponents that are no more than half their height (however, a human lying on the ground is not very tall). Trampling attacks are -1 to hit per potential die of damage. The GM may allow multiple trampling attacks on an opponent in one round if the opponent is horizontally large enough for more than one hoof to hit.

*Primates* may use weapons, including artifacts, just as humans can. It is suggested that arboreal monkeys be allowed to use nothing larger than a dagger, vibro dagger, or small pistol. Terrestrial monkeys and lesser apes can use nothing larger than an axe, short sword, hammer, vibro blade, heavy pistol one (like a Mark V blaster). Only great apes should be allowed the full range of weapons.

Great apes and terrestrial monkeys have two hands (unless they gain or lose some through mutation); lesser apes have four hands and arboreal monkeys have five (counting the prehensile tail, which can even fire a pistol), but they can only use them all if they are not standing on two of them. A lesser ape can hang from a tree or rafter or beam by one hand and have three attacks (if he can reach the intended target); an arboreal monkey can hang by his tail and get four attacks with weapons. A flying lesser ape or arboreal monkey would get four or five attacks respectively.

Brachiating speed is the speed with which a primate can swing from limb to limb or rafter to rafter. Arboreal monkeys and all apes can climb virtually anything but a sheer wall; terrestrial monkeys are less skillful, but they can climb trees better than most humans and about as well as the big cats.

*Birds* need at least 64,000 cubic feet of open space to fly properly. A 40 x 40 x 40 room would be large enough if not cluttered with large objects. On the ground, birds need their claws for walking or standing, and can neither grasp and carry nor attack with them, so a grounded bird is relatively useless for combat purposes.

In the air, a bird can only attack an opponent every second round in three – the first is spent approaching, and the third recovering and turning. If the bird has a long-range attack such as *mental blast* or *radiation eyes*, he can attack on

the approach round as well. The bird is -2 to be hit at all times when in the air. He can only be hit with claws, teeth, sword, etc., while attacking with his own talons and beak (every second round in three), but can be attacked every round with ranged weapons or mutations.

*Saurians* have poor ground clearance; even such low obstacles as fallen logs can slow or even stop their movement on land. They cannot jump at all, and can hardly climb even the shallowest stairs (although a slope or ramp would be no problem). Cold makes saurians sluggish – they move and fight at half speed at temperatures below 50°F, and are paralyzed one round for every six points of cold damage they take (from cryokinesis, for instance).

Poisonous snakes can add poison to their bite, but only five times per 24-hour day. The player should roll his character's poison intensity before beginning play, and that intensity will remain invariable except by mutation.

*Constricting snakes* attack at -2 to hit unless they can find a way to drop on an opponent from above. Once they hit, however, they may continue to do damage to their opponent every round without having to roll a new hit. A con-

stricting snake is +2 to be hit by any creature while it is constricting another creature. Depending on the mode of attack, a hit or miss could also injure the creature the snake is constricting, and an attack on that creature could also injure the snake.

Both kinds of snake can crawl through small openings like broken air ducts and wide pipes (poisonous snakes can get through smaller ones), and can climb all but the thickest trees and other cylindrical objects. They can coil up for comparatively easy carrying, but the bundle a constricting snake makes could hardly be called small. All snakes can move silently as big cats can, surprising opponents on a 1-4 if alone and under ordinary surprise conditions. However, snakes are still surprised on a 1-2 when alone, because they are deaf (a fact that should be remembered for communication situations).

Snakes have no ground clearance at all; if they must slither across a surface that is burning hot or corrosive, for example, they will take more damage than a running man or a galloping horse. They are flexible enough to get over logs, but they can only climb stairs by coiling and uncoiling on each step, a very slow process (a ramp will help).

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# The MARVEL®-Phile

by Jeff Grubb

Welcome back to the MARVEL-Phile, DRAGON® Magazine's continuing compendium of caped cut-ups and costumed crusaders! As the phile grows, we'll try to cover many of the heroes that are not yet detailed in upcoming modules and rosters. If we have a module starring the current team of X-Men™, for example, you shall not see them here. (You might, however, see the original team, or members that have left or passed on).

We are open for suggestions on what YOU want to see within these pages. Heroes from the Second World War? Creatures of the street, such as Cloak™ and Dagger™? The New Mutants™? X-Men™ of the past? Heroes mentioned elsewhere, but with more detail? Send in your votes now!

In keeping with the spirit of producing those heroes not detailed elsewhere, we have this month's offering. MH-3, *Murderworld*, stars the Fantastic Four™, yet missing from the proceedings is one of the FF's early foes, who later became a staunch ally. Direct from the briny deep, we present the former lord of Atlantis, Namor the First, the SUB-MARINER™! So he won't be lonely, we're including an old nemesis of Subby known as TIGER SHARK™!

## SUB-MARINER™

**Namor, Former Monarch of Atlantis**

Fighting: INCREDIBLE (40)  
Agility: REMARKABLE (30)  
Strength: MONSTROUS (75)  
Endurance: INCREDIBLE (40)  
Reason: TYPICAL (6)  
Intuition: REMARKABLE (30)  
Psyche: INCREDIBLE (40)

Health: 185  
Karma: 76  
Resources: GOOD (MONSTROUS)  
Popularity: 5 on the surface world  
(85 with other Atlanteans)

### Powers:

**AMPHIBIOUS NATURE** — Namor can breathe both air and water, due to his mixed heritage. His body can withstand great pressure changes, and his eyes are very sensitive to the green portion of the spectrum, allowing him to see in the murky ocean depths. In addition,

Namor's physiology gives him EXCELLENT resistance to cold.

**MOVEMENT** — Namor can move 3 areas per turn on land, but in the water can swim at TYPICAL speed (6 areas per round). In addition, Namor can fly (using the wings attached to his ankles) at POOR speed (4 areas per round).

**WEAKNESS ON SURFACE** — The above statistics concern Namor when he is underwater, or at least partially wet. Long existence out of water is harmful to the Sub-Mariner. For every hour spent out of water, Namor loses one Rank of his Fighting, Strength, and Endurance, until they drop to TYPICAL levels. His health is unaffected. Should he be totally deprived of water, Namor will take 30 points damage per day and be unable to recover lost Health. Immer-

sion in water automatically restores Health lost through dehydration and brings the Sub-Mariner's stats to normal.

**RULERSHIP** — Until recently, Namor was ruler of Atlantis, an undersea kingdom in the North Atlantic. The parenthetical numbers with Resources and Popularity refer to his abilities as monarch of Atlantis.

**The Sub-Mariner's Story:** Long ago there existed in the North Atlantic Ocean the continent of Atlantis, which sank beneath the sea in a fiery cataclysm. The Olympian god Poseidon, also called Neptune, used his arcane powers to convert a group of his Atlantean followers into water-breathers, granting them super-human stamina, gills, eyes that could see in the ocean depths, and blue skin. This was the creation of Homo mermanus, a subspecies of the main Homo sapiens line. A wandering people, the Atlanteans claimed large areas of the Atlantic floor in both northern and southern hemispheres.

Namor is the son of Princess Fen of the Atlanteans and Leonard MacKenzie, the American captain of the icebreaker *Oracle*. When explosive charges from the *Oracle* damaged an Atlantean city, Fen was sent to investigate. She boarded the ship, revealed for the first time the existence of the Atlantean civilization, and soon became enamored of Captain MacKenzie. The two were wed, but were soon separated when an Atlantean rescue party boarded the ship and recaptured the princess. Namor, whose name means "Avenging Son," was born soon after.

Though of mixed parentage and possessing atypical white skin among the blue-skinned Atlanteans, Namor was accepted as a Prince of Atlantis and grew up with a hostile attitude towards surface-dwelling air-breathers. He used his super-powers to harass and antagonize the surface dwellers. During the Second World War, the Sub-Mariner put aside his hostility towards all surface-men to side with the Allies. During this period he became a member of the Invaders™, fighting alongside Captain America™, Bucky, and the original Human Torch.



Following the war, Namor returned to Atlantis to serve as champion of his undersea city. At this time Atlantis was destroyed and its people disbanded by the actions of an evil surface-dweller named Destiny. Destiny used an ancient power object known as the Serpent Crown to destroy Atlantis and strike Namor down with amnesia. Destiny then left Namor to wander the surface world as a mindless outcast.

It was the second Human Torch™, Johnny Storm of the Fantastic Four, who discovered the Sub-Mariner, at this point little more than a derelict in a flop-house. Johnny helped Namor recover most of his memories by sudden immersion in water (he dropped him in New York Harbor). Blaming the surface-world for the destruction of his home, the re-awakened Namor made several attacks on the air-breathers. During this time he fought several super-human champions, primarily the Fantastic Four.

As the years passed, Namor's attitude toward air-breathers mellowed. He has found the disbanded people of Atlantis, who, desperate for leadership, made him their ruler. Since that time, Namor has served both as a champion and ruler of the undersea kingdom of Atlantis, and as a champion of the surface world, allying when necessary with Doctor Strange™ and the Defenders™. When serving with his air-breathing comrades, Namor shirked "official" duties as Monarch.

In his personal life, Namor has had much heartbreak. After a brief, unsuccessful romance with Sue Storm, the Invisible Girl™, Namor began a long courtship with the Lady Dorma, a full-blooded Atlantean noblewoman. Following the ceremony, however, Dorma was captured and slain by Llyra, another *homo sapiens/homo mermanus* hybrid who possessed shape-shifting abilities. Following Dorma's death, Namor formed no deep attachments for some time. Most recently he has courted Marrina™ of Alpha Flight, an amphibious alien, but that relationship has ended as well.

Namor has always been torn between his sense of duty to his people and his loyal devotion to those he loves. Important matters of state would often take a back seat to his own adventures, and on occasion the Sub-Mariner would return from a mission to find the capital in ruins from some attack by Atlantean barbarians or an aquatic villain. Finally cast out by his mother's people, Namor is a free agent, now unshackled by kingly responsibilities and duties.



## **TIGER SHARK™**

**Todd Arliss, Criminal**

Fighting: AMAZING (50)  
Agility: EXCELLENT (20)  
Strength: MONSTROUS (75)  
Endurance: REMARKABLE (30)  
Reason: TYPICAL (6)  
Intuition: REMARKABLE (30)  
Psyche: EXCELLENT (20)

Health: 175  
Karma: 46  
Resources: TYPICAL  
Popularity: 2

### **Powers:**

**AMPHIBIOUS NATURE** — The mutagenic changes in Arliss' body gave him many of the attributes of Namor, including the ability to withstand the rigors of the ocean. Tiger Shark's body can withstand great ocean depths, his eyes are more attuned to the green part of the spectrum, allowing him to peer through the murky ocean depths, and his blood circulation gives him EXCELLENT resistance to cold.

**BODY ARMOR** — The process that changed Arliss into Tiger Shark also gave him many shark-like abilities, including a tough hide. Treat this as EXCELLENT Body Armor.

**TEETH** — In addition to the dense hide, Arliss gained a set of razor-sharp, pointed teeth. He can bite for EXCELLENT damage against a held opponent,

and attacks in this fashion are resolved on the Hack and Slash table.

**SWIMMING** — Tiger Shark can swim 6 areas in a round. His prowess is augmented by the design of his suit, possessing a large sharklike fin down his back.

**WEAKNESS ON THE SURFACE** — Like Namor, Tiger Shark suffers from being exposed to air, losing one rank for every hour he is above the surface until his Strength, Endurance, and Fighting are all POOR. Total deprivation from water would cause Arliss to further weaken and perish. Tiger Shark's suit, however, bathes him with a thin layer of water; unless the suit is damaged, it will prevent any loss of ability regardless of the time spent on land.

**Tiger Shark's Story:** Todd Arliss was a rising star, an Olympic athlete who set new swimming records in the games. He had a bright future as well, amassing a half-million dollars in advances for the time when he turned professional. This bright future was shattered when Todd, in rescuing a man overboard from a pleasure boat, was severely injured. The injury did not affect Arliss' normal movements, but guaranteed he would never compete again.

Arliss spent most of his advance money seeking medical help. Toward the end of that time Arliss met the evil Doctor Dorcas, a criminal marine biologist, who proposed a radical solution to his problems. Working in his secret undersea lab, Dorcas used Arliss as a test subject for his "morphotron," a device that could imprint a set of genetic patterns on a radically different being. Dorcas first imprinted the genetic structure of a tiger shark on Arliss, then followed with the genetic imprint of Namor, whom Dorcas had captured. The combined imprinting gave Arliss the strengths of both the shark and Namor, but also affected his mind, turning the would-be Olympic champion to criminal activity.

In their first contest, Tiger Shark bested Namor and declared himself ruler of Atlantis, but Namor recovered quickly and returned to defeat and imprison Arliss. Since that time Tiger Shark has remained an enemy of Namor and the people of Atlantis. Most recently, Arliss joined Radioactive Man™, Beetle™, and others to form the third Masters of Evil. Tiger Shark has left most of his humanity behind, and remains a vicious and dangerous foe.





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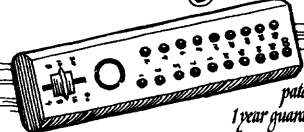
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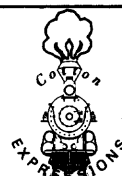
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# SF/gaming convention calendar

## **EARTHCON IV, Sept. 7-9**

This convention will be held at the Holiday Inn in Cleveland, Ohio. Events will include workshops, panels on game design and scenario writing, tournaments, board games, role-playing games, a masquerade, "filksinging," an art show, a *Star Trek* festival, and more. Poul Anderson, Steve Jackson, and Tom Moldvay will be among the guests of honor. For further information, contact: Earthcon IV, P.O. Box 5641, Cleveland OH 44101.

## **WARGAMERS' WEEKEND, Sept. 15-16**

To be staged at the DAV Hall in Newburyport, Mass., this convention will feature fantasy role-playing, war, and miniatures games. Advance registration fees are \$3 per day, and \$5 at the door; most games have a \$2 gamemaster fee. For more information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: The Toy Soldier, 1 Hales Court, Newburyport MA 01950.

## **TENTH ANNUAL COUNCIL OF NATIONS, Oct. 5-8**

This special anniversary convention will include open fantasy role-playing gaming, mini-battles, a mini-painting contest, game instruction, a costume contest, an auction, and numerous tournaments. For details, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to I. M. Lord, SWA 10th Council, 1639 Eastern Parkway, Schenectady NY 12309.

## **WINGAMES V, Oct. 5-7**

This convention centers around a large AD&D® tournament, with prizes and trophies for most events. Admission is free at the door, though a small charge (50¢ to \$3) exists per event entered. Contact: University of Manitoba Gaming Club, Box 80, University Center, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3T 2N2.

## **HISTORICAL WARGAME WEEKEND, Oct. 6-7**

This military miniatures convention will be staged at the War Memorial Art Museum in Milwaukee, Wis. Events will include historical wargames, sale of hobby-related materials, and a painting contest. Admission fees at the door are \$2.50 per day or \$4 for both days. Additional costs include a \$1 event fee per game and an entry fee for the painting competition (\$1 per category, with a \$3 limit). For more information, contact: Joe Gepfert, 3440 S. Monterey Dr., New Berlin WI 53151, or Bill Protz, Jr., 5690 W. Glenbrook Rd., Brown Deer WI 53223.

## **LIN-CON VI, Oct. 12-14**

To be held at the Gateway Auditorium in Lincoln, Neb., this convention will feature board games, miniatures events, and role-playing tournaments. Contact: Merl Hayes, c/o Hobby Town, 134 North 13th St., Lincoln NE 68508, or call (402)476-3829.

## **UPCON II, Oct. 12-13**

This convention will be held at North Texas State University in Denton, Texas. In addition to the usual tournaments, the movie *Lord of the Rings* will be shown in the NTSU Lyceum. Admission is \$1. For more information and a preregistration form, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: North Texas State University, University Program Council, UPCon II/Preregistration, NT Station P.O. Box 13705, Denton TX 76203.

## **CONSTELLATION III, Oct. 19-21**

This convention will be staged at the Sheraton Inn located in Huntsville, Ala. Master of ceremonies will be Frank Kelly Freas, and guests of honor will include Gordon R. Dickson, Maurine Dorris, and Tim Bolger. Featured events are readings, panels, autograph sessions, a masquerade, hearts and gaming tournaments, an art show, and an auction. Registration fees for the convention are \$13 until September 15, and \$16 at the door. For additional information about this event, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Con-Stellation III, P.O. Box 4857, Huntsville AL 35815.

## **CRUSADER CON IV, Oct. 19-21**

This event will be held at the Metropolitan State College campus in Denver, Colo. Events will include *Diplomacy*®, *Kingmaker*™, *AD&D*®, *Traveller*®, *Squad Leader*™, *Car Wars*™, and *Star Fleet Battles*™ tournaments. Registration is \$8 until October 1, and \$10 thereafter. For more details, contact: The Auraria Gamer's Club, P.O. Box 13395, Denver CO 80201-3395.

## **DRAGONKING 1984, Oct. 19-20**

This fantasy convention will be held at the campus of Colby College in Waterville, Maine. Various role-playing games and seminars will be featured. For more details, contact: Dragonking, 153 Main St., Waterville ME 04901, or call (207)873-1508.

## **BOUCHERCON XV, Oct. 26-28**

This convention, which focuses on the mystery and crime fiction genre, will take place at the Americana Congress Hotel in Chicago, Ill. Guest of honor will be Bill Pronzini, one of the field's most prolific and popular authors. Events will include feature talks, panel discussions, slide shows and films, and a Sunday banquet. Registration fees are \$25; banquet charge is \$15. For more details, contact: 2nd City Skulduggery, P.O. Box 576, Hinsdale IL 60521.

## **FANTASY FAIRE, Oct. 26-28**

This annual convention will be held in Alhambra, Cal., and will feature numerous fantasy role-playing games, "filksinging," films, a cabaret, and a costume contest. For further details, contact: Fantasy Publishing Co., 1855 West Main St., Alhambra CA 91801, or call (818)337-7947.

## **ICON IX, Oct. 26-28**

This annual science-fiction convention will be staged at the Abbey Inn in Iowa City, Iowa. Guests of Honor will be Dean Ing and Wilson Tucker. Registration fees are \$10 until October 1, and \$15 thereafter. Art show and huckster inquiries are welcome. For further information about the convention, contact: Icon IX, P.O. Box 525, Iowa City IA 52244-0525.

## **NECRONOMICON '84, Nov. 2-4**

This convention will be held at the Holiday Inn in Tampa, Fla. Guests of honor will be Larry Niven and Andre Norton. Activities will include panels, autograph sessions, an art show, trivia contests, and a special tour to the Kennedy Space Center. Registration fees are \$10 until October 1, and \$15 thereafter. For further information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Necronomicon '84, P.O. Box 2076, River-view FL 33569.

## **R-CON 1, Nov. 2-4**

This gaming convention will be held at the Genesee Plaza Holiday Inn in Rochester, NY. Guests include David Gerrold and Forrest J. Ackerman. Featured will be role-playing and board games, panels, films, an art show, and a masquerade. Registration fees are \$12. Contact: R-Con 1, P.O. Box 1701, Rochester NY 14603.

## **UTHERCON 4, Nov. 9-11**

To be held at University of Texas in Austin, Texas, this convention will feature a wide range of role-playing games. Registration fees are \$3 until November 1, and \$5 thereafter. Contact: David F. Nalle, 3212 Red River #109, Austin TX 78705, or call (512)477-1704.

## **UNICON 1, Nov. 30 - Dec. 2**

This gaming convention will include various role-playing competitions, retail booths, and speakers. Admissions fees are \$5 for the weekend, \$2 per day for Nov. 30 and Dec. 2, and \$3 for Dec. 1. For more information, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: John A. Stormes, Box 279, L.A. Pittenger Student Center, 2000 University Avenue, Muncie IN 47306.

## **U-MASS CON, Dec. 1-2**

This gaming convention will take place at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, Mass. For more details, contact: Steven Bailey, P.O. Box 117, Amherst MA 01002.

## **EVECON II, Dec. 28-30**

This convention will be staged at the Tysons Westpark Hotel in McLean, Va. Attendance will be limited to 1,200 people. Admission fees are \$10 until November 1, \$12 until December 1, and \$15 at the door. For more details, contact: EveCon, P.O. Box 128, Aberdeen MD 21001.



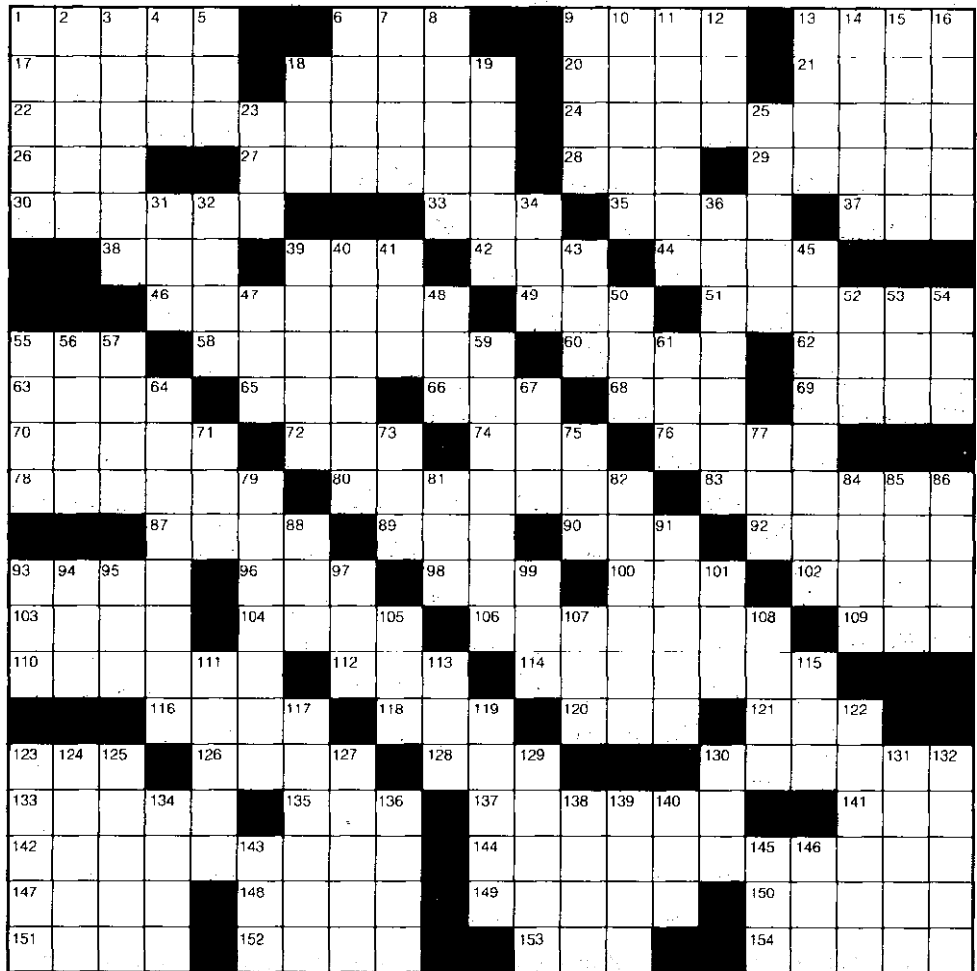
# MONSTER IN THE MIDDLE

by Michael D. Selinker

(Answer on page 92.)

## ACROSS

1. Swarm creature
4. Ball and socket joint
9. Dwarf in 88 Down's G3
13. 1963 Genesis hit
17. Marvel Two-\_\_ (comic)
18. Jason's wife
20. \_\_ magic
21. \_\_ and alack
22. Pit fiend stars in variety shows
24. Humanoid found among Dirty Harry's pals
26. Hound of \_\_ Omen
27. Some titans
28. " \_\_ said to her, I said . . ."
29. Spine-tingling
30. Undead at heart of hackneyed saying
33. Use infravision
35. He banned the Beach Boys
37. Football scores
38. Spanish aunt
39. Compass pt.
42. Little tyke
44. Transact with a tradesman
46. \_\_ dead
49. Use a mending spell
51. Swashbuckler Flynn, *et al.*
55. \_\_ whip
58. Fumblers include cigar-shaped creature
60. \_\_ woodland beings
62. Deep \_\_
63. Washing
65. Greek letter
66. Lawyer: Abbr.
68. \_\_ Leppard
69. Ivory \_\_
70. \_\_ hawk
72. Tarzan portrayer Ron
74. Belonging to a sun god
76. \_\_ Frontiers® game
78. Playground device
80. Big bird inhabiting African nation
83. Pack animals
87. Raiders bad guy
89. \_\_ Partha
90. Sandy's statement
92. Cosmetics' Lauder
93. Hijacked plane destination
96. Novel or social ending
98. Building wing
100. Tavern quaff
102. Part of 99 down
103. Rearrangement: Abbr.
104. TV horse
106. Two-headed giant in middle of location
109. Drunk
110. "I'd love \_\_ you, but . . ."
112. \_\_ dimension
114. Beowulf's foe
116. Hauled into court
118. Julius Erving
120. Do sums
121. Word meaning "born"
123. Roz Sumner's team
126. Raven
128. Egyptian luck god
130. Adheres to having giant insect in center
133. Japanese Americans
135. Draft horse
137. *Taxi's* Nardo
141. Bread or whiskey
142. Dry out with many-headed reptile
144. Succubus at hub of outer plane
147. Continually
148. ". . . with \_\_ foot pole"
149. Dice adjective part
150. Latissimus \_\_ (side muscle)
151. \_\_ Auberjonois
152. Lycanthrope prefix
153. Carrie or Louis
154. Gown



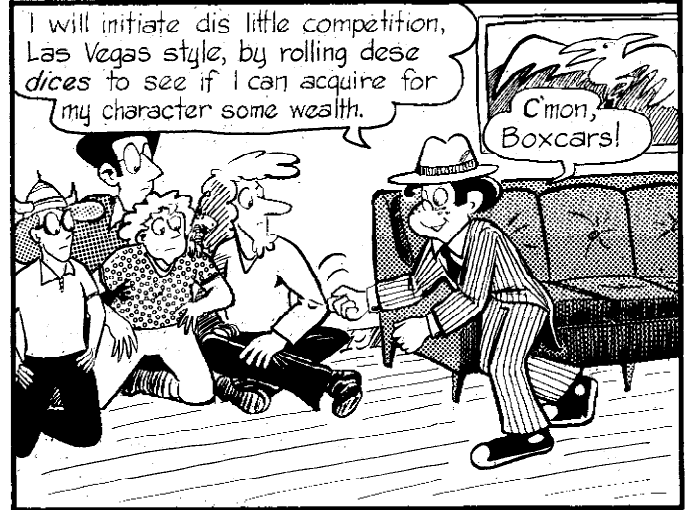
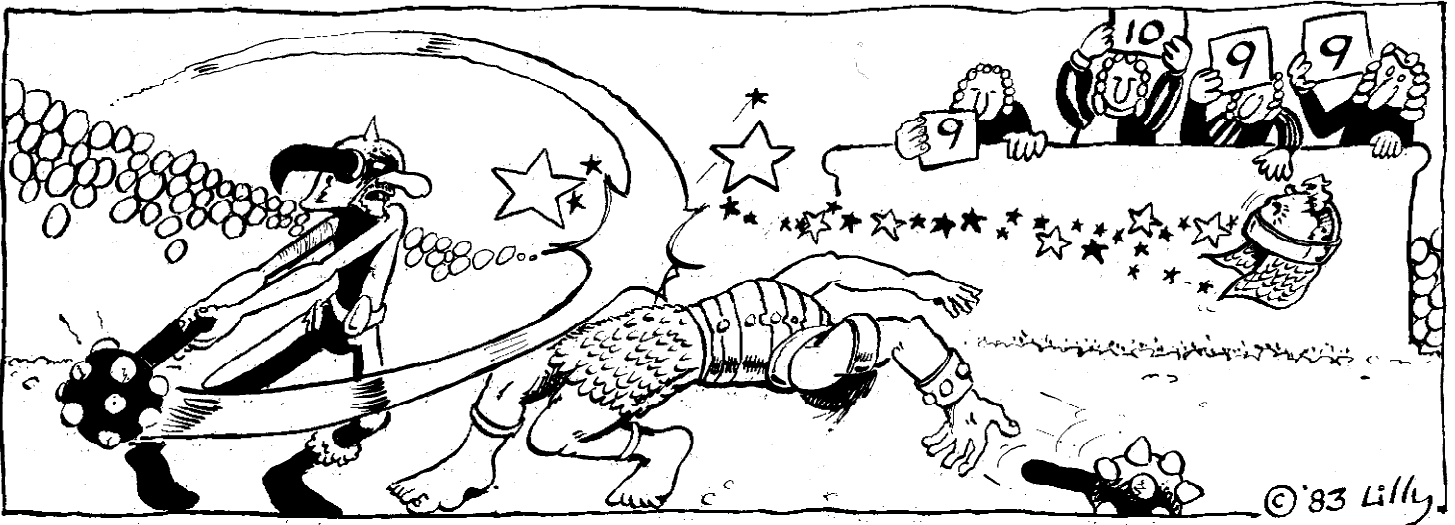
## DOWN

1. Urban
2. " \_\_ modesty"
3. \_\_ up (err)
4. Part of AD&D® product name
5. Author Harper
6. Immobilized by a spell
7. Monty Python's Eric
8. "Knights are non-hereditary"
9. Gold and silver
10. "Who Can It \_\_?" (Men At Work hit)
11. Property of "The Organization"
12. Altar words
13. Clerical weapon
14. "Red \_\_!"
15. Genie type
16. Beasts of burden
18. 1049, to Brutus
19. Possession
23. Victory symbol
25. Reaply pitch
31. Top secret org.
32. Lynch
34. Dawn goddess
36. Night of Shakespeare features fairy
39. Overact
40. *Recon* weapon
41. Nice summer
43. Gangbusters "gumshoe"
45. Humanoid involved in advancement
47. Wrath
48. Time period
50. Mass of bucks
52. Lennon's widow
53. Pasture
54. Concorde, e.g.
55. Certain tides
56. 16 on the wind force chart
57. Shoshonean tribe
59. Short walks w/ regenerator
61. *WKRP* newsman
64. Prisoners capture deer
67. Middle name of a game
71. See 15 Down
73. " \_\_, The Hunter From The Future"
75. Live FRP org.
77. Sailor's assent
79. Center of soft cry is familiar
81. *Norma* \_\_
82. Gave a speech
84. Ultimate degrees
85. \_\_ U
86. Used ham radio, half time
88. A certain co.
91. Gnoll's relative
93. \_\_ lord
94. Popular card game
95. Scrooge's word
97. Actor Danson
99. Achaierai weapon
101. Terminus
105. Dead shell
107. \_\_ la la
108. Chap
111. Clear
113. \_\_ of might
115. Hawaiian garland
117. Contribute
119. Army vehicles
122. To write: Fr.
123. " \_\_ The Storm Giant's Castle"
124. Colander
125. Pale
127. \_\_ weird
129. At -10 HP
130. Religious school: Abbr.
131. Son of \_\_
132. Some trucks
134. *Jane* \_\_
136. Simmons of Kiss
138. \_\_ Chernak
139. \_\_ fixe
140. Actor Beatty
143. Uncooked
145. Bizarre
146. Neither



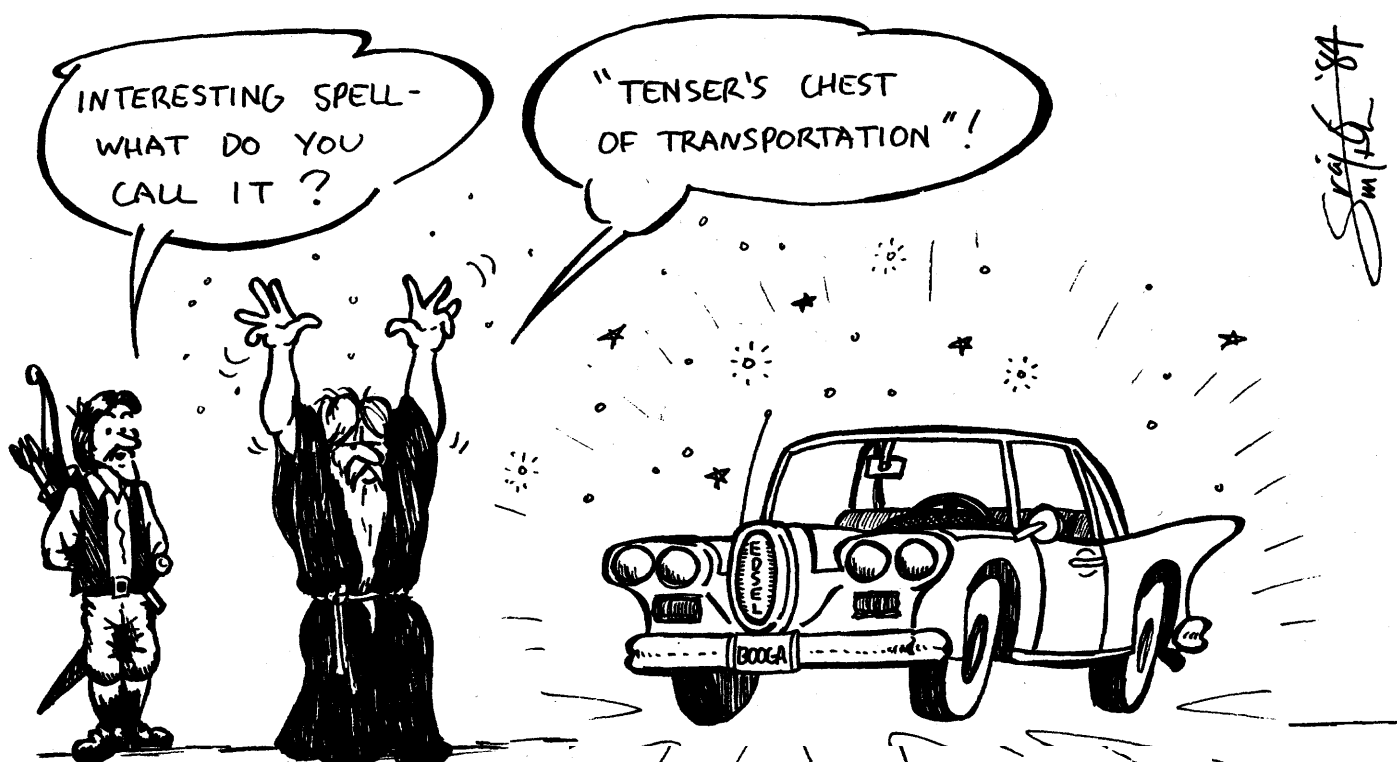
*A nymph, one of peace's proponents,  
Never fights, but seduces opponents.  
Their violence she'll quell  
As if using a spell.  
You should see her material components.*

— Toni Leigh Perry

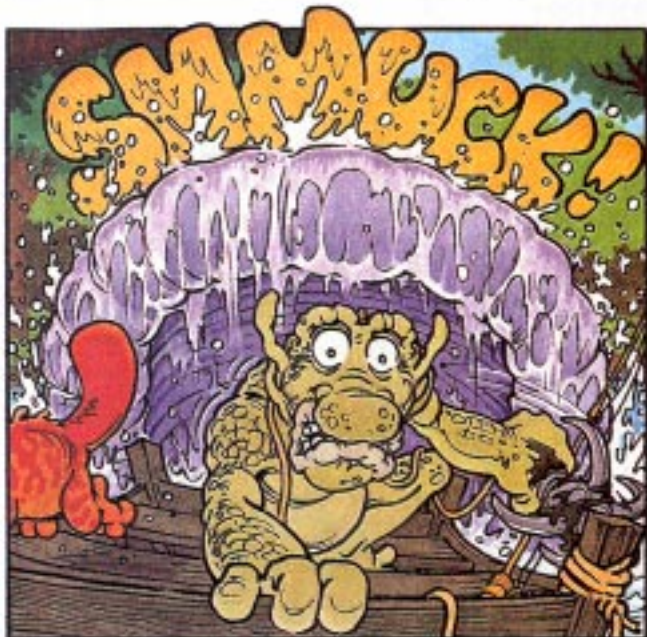
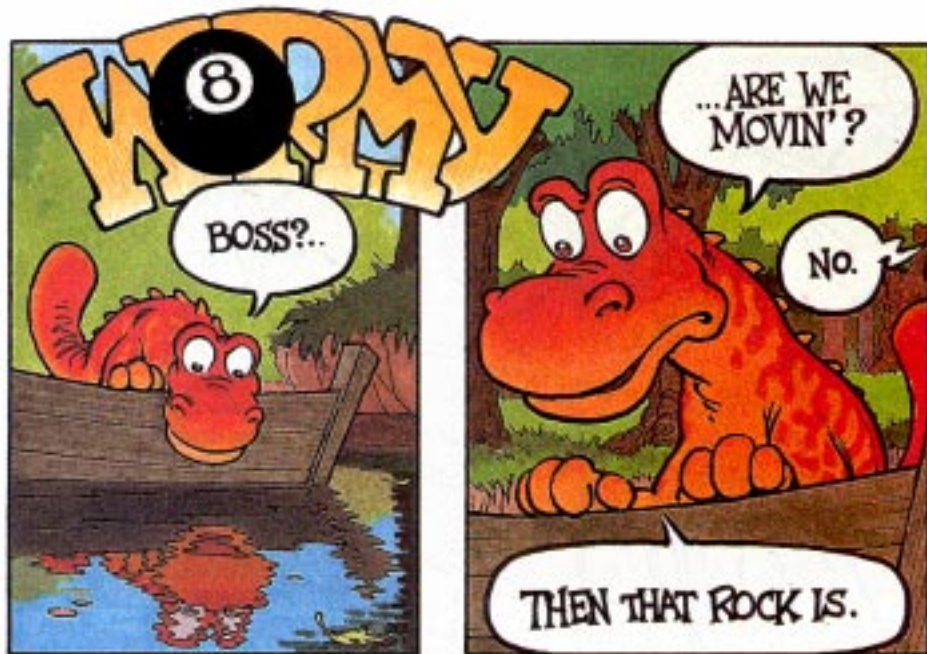




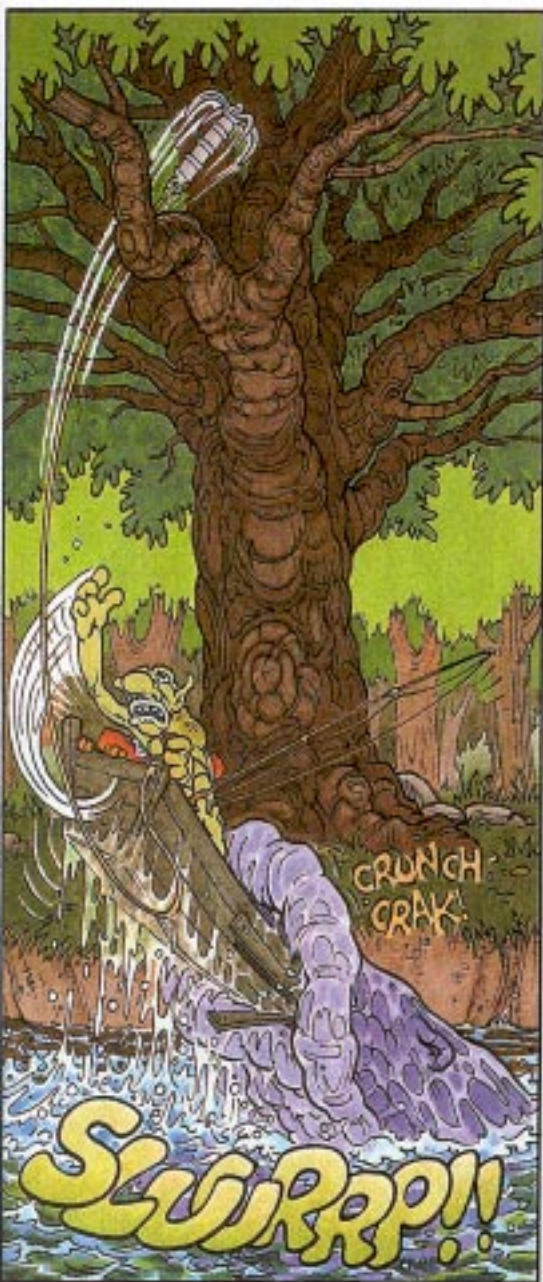
"RATS!! JUST ONCE, COULDN'T YOU CONJURE UP A KETTLE OF BEEF STEW?"

















# SNARFQUEST

# 14

BY ELMORE

MY SHIP... IT IS DESTROYED! I AM FOREVER LOST ON THIS DREADFUL, PRIMITIVE PLANET... OH DEPRESSION DEPRESSION!



WELL WHAT'S DONE IS DONE. DAT DRAGON HAS ALREADY EATEN YER SHIP... YOU IS LUCKY TO ESCAPE FROM ITS BELLY. BESIDES, WE CAN BUILD YOU ANOTHER SHIP.

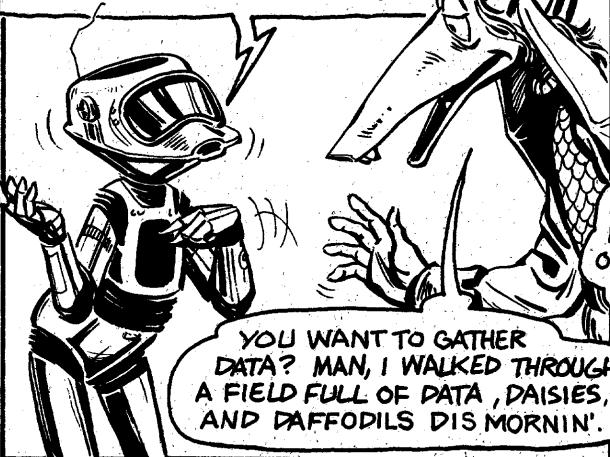


IMPOSSIBLE! IMPOSSIBLE!

HEY-HEY-HEEY! CALMDOWN, DUDE... DERE'S PLENTY OF WOOD AROUND HERE... BUT DERE'S NO BIG LAKES OR SEAS FOR MILES AN' MILES.



YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND, I AM A ROBOT. MY MISSION WAS TO OBTAIN AND GATHER DATA FROM THIS SECTOR AND RETURN TO BASE... BUT MY SHIP MALFUNCTIONED AND CRASHED.



YOU WANT TO GATHER DATA? MAN, I WALKED THROUGH A FIELD FULL OF DATA, DAISIES, AND DAFFODILS DIS MORNIN'.

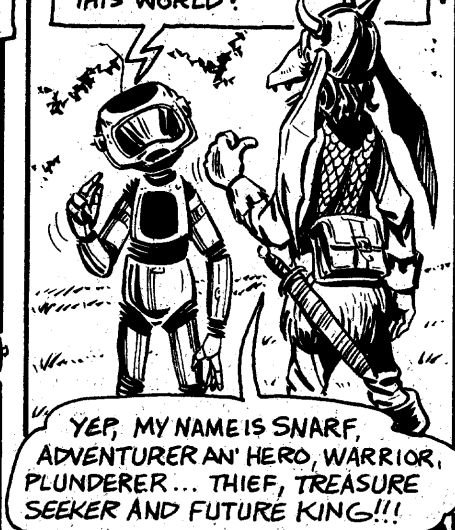
I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT FLOWERS. I'M REFERRING TO OBJECTS OR CONDITIONS THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO THIS PLANET!!



MAN, YOU ARE LOOKIN' AT ONE IMPORTANT DUDE!!

I AM?

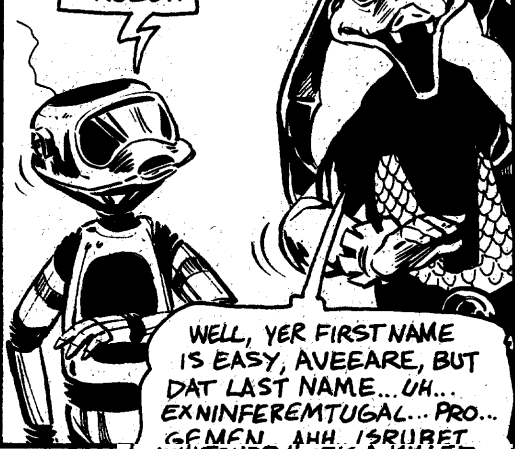
YOU?... ARE YOU SOMEONE THAT COULD POSSIBLY MOLD THE FUTURE OF THIS WORLD?



YEP, MY NAME IS SNARF, ADVENTURER AN' HERO, WARRIOR, PLUNDERER... THIEF, TREASURE SEEKER AND FUTURE KING!!!

IF THIS IS TRUE, PERHAPS I COULD BE OF SERVICE TO YOU. I AM A VR-AVEEARE?

REPEAT- I AM A VR- X9 4 MZ GALACTIC PROBE, GOVERNMENT ISSUE ROBOT.

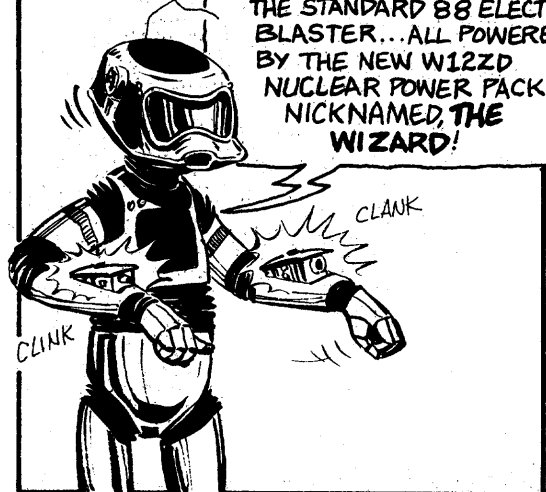


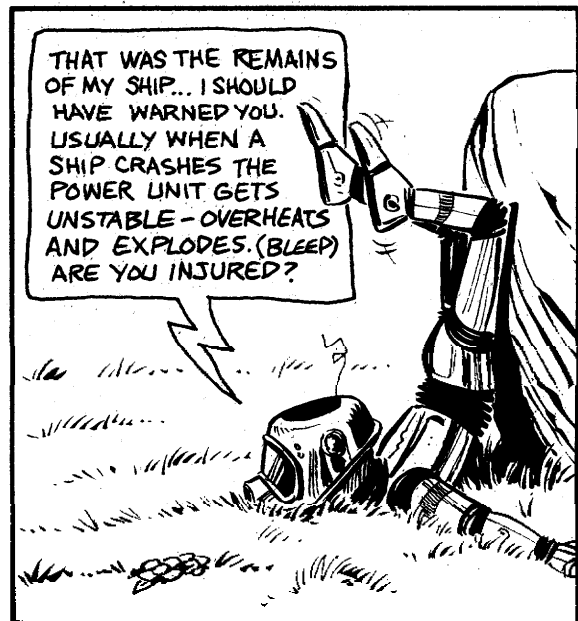
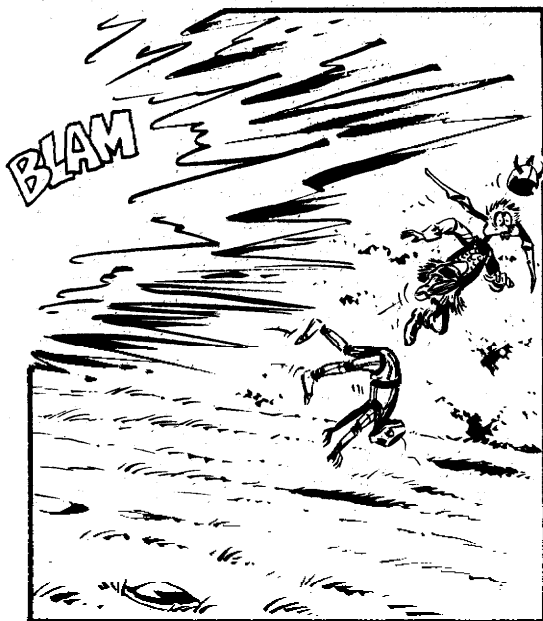
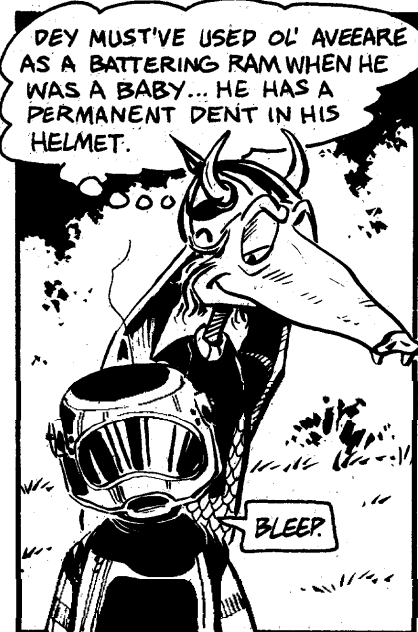
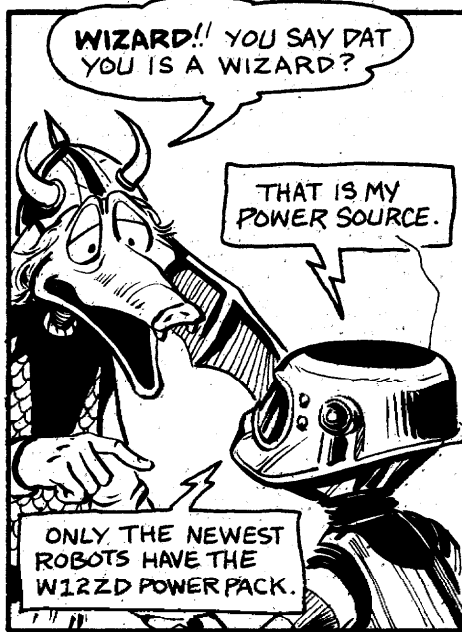
WELL, YER FIRST NAME IS EASY, AVEEARE, BUT DAT LAST NAME... UH... EXNINFEREMTUGAL... PRO... GGMEN AHH ISRIUBET WHATEVER!! IT'S A KILLER.

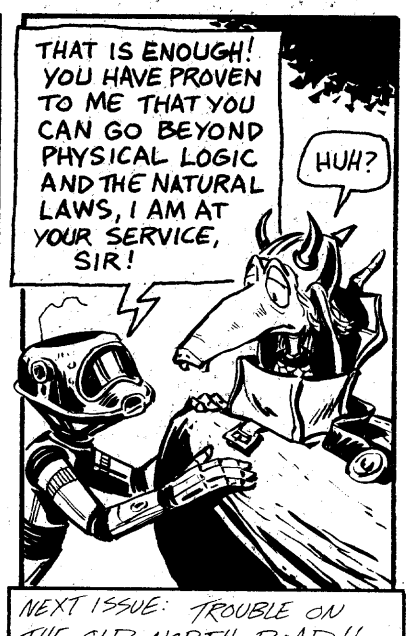
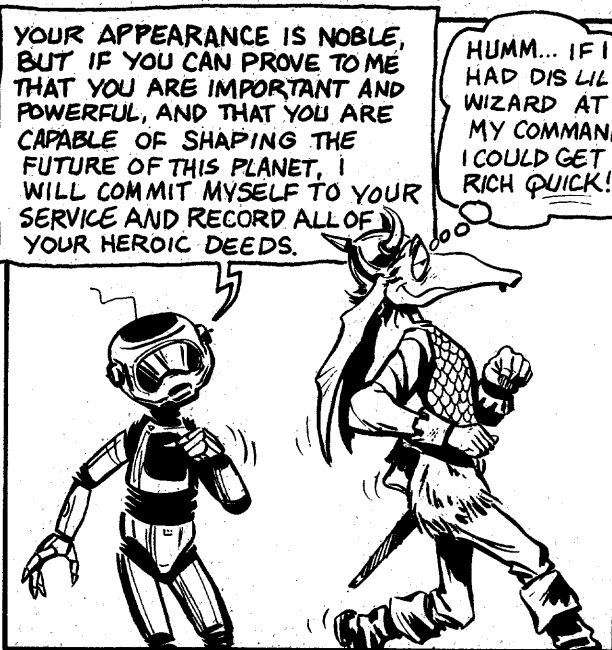
LOOKS LIKE YA LOST YER SWORD, AVEEARE. IT'S A TOUGH WORLD, SO WE BETTER GET YOU A NEW WEAPON.



... WEAPONS? I MAY APPEAR DEFENSELESS, BUT I AM EQUIPPED WITH THE LATEST K48 LASER SYSTEM AND THE STANDARD 88 ELECTRO BLASTER... ALL POWERED BY THE NEW W122D NUCLEAR POWER PACK, NICKNAMED THE WIZARD!









# The forum

(From page 6)

ment. The same thing happens in evil campaigns. Let me tell you a true story, which I heard from a gamer I'll call Bob. (I'm sure he wouldn't want his real name used here.)

For several years, Bob played an ordinary D&D campaign with a group of close friends. Then, when they began playing an all-evil campaign, they started out on a very low level of "atrocious." First they killed an unbearably self-righteous paladin, then graduated to robbing rich merchants. Their best thief character took a leaf from the comics and risked life and limb to write "the king is a fink" on the king's own tower wall. Good clean fun? Certainly, but it didn't stop there. Soon someone pointed out that they weren't really being evil, merely naughty.

The group played for several months, with the ante getting higher and higher. Soon they were stealing from the starving poor, burning temples and forcing the priests to stay inside to burn with them, and torturing prisoners in more and more inventive ways. Finally, some of the players insisted on having their characters gang-rape and murder a princess. At this point, the two women in the group rebelled. They forced a discussion of the issue by reading a list of every crime the group's characters had committed in the name of good fun. "Listening to that list in cold blood," Bob told me, "was a sickening experience." No one in the group could even look at anyone else in embarrassment.

What really shook Bob, though, was the way in which he and his friends grew emotionally and morally calloused as their characters' crimes grew worse. At the beginning, no one would even have thought of committing a brutal rape and murder — it wouldn't have seemed fun at all. By the end, the idea seemed perfectly logical. Of course, the NPCs who were the victims of these crimes were just a few lines of description and a handful of statistics, but even so, the group began by having some compassion for these imaginary people and ended up by having none. Since compassion is one of the things that makes us human, not animals, I maintain that eroding one's sense of

compassion is too high a price to pay for a few evenings of entertainment.

By now, I'm sure that any evil-style players reading this are sneering at me and Bob's group and assuring themselves that they can keep things under control. I doubt this. What we're dealing with when we play FRP games is group psychology, and groups and their momentum have a real power over the individual members who make them up. Anyone weak enough to be in an evil campaign in the first place is going to find himself drawn to more and more "creative" acts of evil. Finding out just how dark and nasty their minds can be is only going to increase their sense of being powerless, weak, and out of control.

Please notice that the above does not refer to the player who occasionally runs an evil PC or who likes neutral but dashing thief characters. I'm talking about the ardent players of evil campaigns who get angry whenever someone suggests that there's something odd about their favorite sport. These players are doubtless steaming right now, thinking that I'm way off base, because once again someone is making "too much" out of a simple game. To them I say that if you think poison, torture, murder, and rape are fun, then you've got a big problem, even if you confine that problem to fantasies.

Katharine Kerr  
San Francisco, Calif.

\* \* \* \*

It's nice to see Ken Rolston doing reviews for DRAGON. He has a good style and is generally in touch with what's going on in the industry. However, I'd like to point out some inaccuracies in his capsule review of *To Challenge Tomorrow* in #85.

I'm sorry the scenarios were "poorly developed," but we've found that the experienced gamers who buy *TCT* prefer scenarios which provide extensive background information and allow the GM to improvise and adapt within a flexible framework. Oddly enough, I believe that Jerry Epperson's review in *ARES* says the exact opposite, describing the scenarios as unusually complete.

The reference to "the History of the World on a Low Budget" is somewhat irksome. *TCT* was

intended as a basic framework to be used with the series of expansion/background aids we are releasing (*Triad*, *London by Night*, *Challengers*, etc.). The general background in *TCT* is a basic guide, and not intended as anything more.

Finally, Ken's comment on the lack of "elaborate packaging" shows a certain lack of research. As has been the practice with all of our games for some time, *TCT* is available in two packaging styles, both the inexpensive zip-lock bag (which I assume Ken has) and a more elaborate, attractive and durable box, more in keeping with "industry standards," though at \$1 extra. This gives the option of a lower priced edition for those more interested in quality of content than flashy extras (much as was the past practice of SPI). On the same page Ken criticizes *The Palladium Role Playing Game* for similar reasons. It seems to me that most players buying a game from a smaller company already have dice and most materials, and are looking for new ideas, and I hope that they are able to see beyond appearances to find quality. As a reader I find it a bit annoying that Ken thinks I am looking for pretty packages and accessories rather than innovation and economy.

David F. Nalle  
Ragnarok Enterprises  
Washington, D.C.

## Out on a Limb

(From page 4)

able or willing to stretch his reasoning or make a guess to arrive at an answer. We don't let writers get away with that very often, or else the ecology articles would be so bland they wouldn't be worth printing. But we'd rather have someone say that a fact is undeterminable rather than have him make an off-the-wall assumption just because he felt the issue had to be decided one way or the other.

Will the "blank spots" ever be filled in? Probably not, or at least not unless we get the benefit of some insight about the nature of a creature that didn't get included in its official description. The only way a breakthrough of knowledge can be achieved is if some additional knowledge can be gained upon which to base some more assumptions and theories. Since the knowledge we already have about AD&D® game monsters is all we're liable to get, any ecology article we publish contains all the breakthroughs you're likely to read. — KM

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## Answer to puzzle

CTIAI...P...OBMI...MAMA  
INONE...MEDEA...READ...AIAS  
VAUDE...VILLIES...ENFORCERS  
...FIDERS...SOI...IERI  
CL...CHE...SEE...WATT...TDS  
...TIA...ENE...TOT...SWAP  
...ANIMATE...SEW...FRROLS  
EGO...GROPER...CALL...ONFS  
BATH...ET...ATT...DEF...GOAI  
BLOOD...ELY...RAS...STAR  
SEESAW...MORCO...HYFNAS  
...IOFI...RAI...ARF...EST...I  
CUBA...IST...ELL...ALE...SHIN  
ANAG...MRED...SETTING...SOI  
LOHELP...DOJO...GREND...ET  
...SUF...DRJ...ADD...NI  
USA...GROW...RIS...STICKS  
NIST...NAG...I...AINT...RYE  
DEHYDRATE...PANDEMON...UM  
EVER...ATE...SID...DORS  
RINE...WIRE...NYI...DRESS



# BUG-EYED MONSTERS

## They Want Our Women!

On silent grav sleds, the alien creatures slide through the forest, readying their lasers and stunners, drooling slightly in anticipation. They choose their first target: a little clapboard house nestled in the woods above town. They attack. The sounds of lasers and stunners are soon met by cries of fear and rage. Wild with lust, they fail to notice when one human makes it to a car and careens away to rouse the citizenry of the small town against the alien threat.

Ugly, slobbering, bug-eyed monsters! They land in remote American towns and make off with women. BUG-EYED MONSTERS is the new West End release by Greg Costikyan, designer of the successful *Creature That Ate Shboygan*.<sup>TM</sup> In this game, Greg returns to the "Creature" genre, bringing a flying saucer with menacing monsters to the quiet remote American town of Freedom, New Hampshire.

One player, as the monster, must attempt to kidnap the earthling women (the most beautiful in the universe). The other player must rally the citizens of the town to

stop the repulsive invaders and save his womenfolk from a fate worse than death.

A special "Aliens Kidnap Presidential Hopeful" scenario is also provided. Dwight Eisenhower, campaigning for the New Hampshire primary, along with an entourage of state troopers and secret service men, is surprised by a party of bug-eyed monsters. Will they kidnap America's war hero?

A simple but elegant game system with clear brief rules makes BUG-EYED MONSTERS a good introduction to adventure gaming, but its subject and smooth play will appeal to the hardcore gamer as well.

### THE DESIGNER

Greg Costikyan is the designer of nine published games, including THE CREATURE THAT ATE SHEBOYGAN,<sup>TM</sup> SWORDS AND SORCERY,<sup>TM</sup> DEATH MAZE,<sup>TM</sup> RETURN OF THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT,<sup>TM</sup> and TRAIL BLAZER.<sup>TM</sup>

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- one 22" x 17" game map
- 160 full-color, back-printed precision die cut 5/8" counters.
- one 8-page rules booklet
- two dice and full-color game box (1" wide bookshelf size box)



**Complexity: Low**  
**Solitaire Suitability: Low**  
**Players: Two**  
**Game Scale: Individual Person**  
**Playing Time: An hour or less for experienced gamers**



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